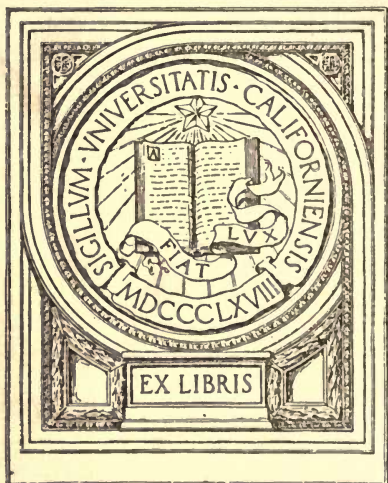


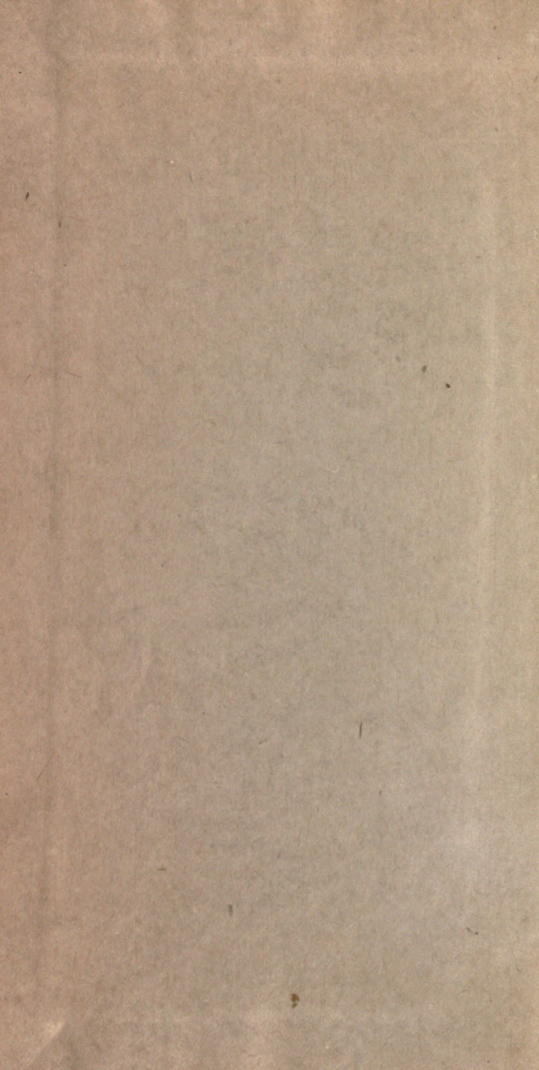
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NEW ENGLISH THEATRE

OF THE CITY OF LONDON

By the Hon. the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of London.

Printed by W. B. M. 1711.

By the Hon. the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of London.

NEW ENGLISH THEATRE

OF DRAMA

AND MUSIC

AND

THE



BY

JOHN

AND

THE

C. S. S.
NEW ENGLISH THEATRE

Vol. LX.

*Amphitryon, Double Dealer,
Double Gallant,
Inconstant, Constant Couple.*



L O N D O N.

*Printed for, J. Rivington & Sons, T. Doddsley,
T. Lowndes, T. Cadogan, W. Nicoll, S. Bladen, &c.*

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AMPHITRION.



Edwards del.

Published April 20 1777 by T. Lowndes & Partners.

Goldier Sculp.

*MR. WOODWARD in the Character of SOCIA.
This Santhorn for once shall be my Lady.*

A M P H I T R Y O N :
OR, THE
T W O S O S I A S.

A
C O M E D Y,

Altered from D R Y D E N,

By Mr. W O O D W A R D.

Marked with the Variations of the

M A N A G E R ' S B O O K,

A T T H E

Théâtre-Royal in Covent-Garden.




L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR T. LOWNDES, T. CASLON,
C. CORBETT, AND S. BLADON.

M.DCC.LXXVII.

PREFACE

THE abilities of Dryden as a writer, are so generally and so justly acknowledged to be of the first class, that it would be a reproach to any man, to give any of his productions without alleging his name. But the alteration of his *Amphitruon*, which the reason is evident; for it is so tainted with the obscenities and immorality of the times, in which he wrote, that the present time, how ever virtuous and correct, has too much reason to require decency, to permit

 The Reader is desired to observe, that the Passages omitted in the Representation at the Theatres are here preserved, and marked with single inverted Commas; as at Lines 2 to 4, in Page 20.

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P R E F A C E.

THE abilities of DRYDEN as a writer, are so generally and so justly acknowledged to be of the first class, that it would be something worse than impropriety, to alter any of his productions without assigning the reason. For the alteration of his AMPHITRYON, indeed, the reason is evident; for it is so tainted with the profaneness and immodesty of the time in which he wrote, that the present time, however selfish and corrupt, has too much regard to external decorum, to permit the representation of it upon the stage, without drawing a veil, at least, over some part of its deformity: the principal part of the alterations, therefore, are made with a moral view; though some inaccuracies, which were remarked on the examination which these alterations made necessary, are also removed, of which the following are the chief.

In the scene between Sofia and Mercury in the second act, Amphitryon is supposed to have sent a buckle of diamonds by Sofia, as a present to Alcmena; for Sofia first asks Mercury “if Amphitryon did send a certain servant with a present to his wife;” and soon after asks him, “what that present was,” which, by Mercury’s answer, appears to be the diamond buckle: yet in the scene between Amphitryon and Alcmena, in the third act, when Alcmena asks him, as a proof of his having been with her before, from whose hands she had the jewel, he cries out, “This is amazing! have *I* already given you those diamonds? *the present I reserved*——” And instead of supposing that Sofia had delivered

A 2

them

P R E F A C E.

them as part of his errand, which he pretended he could not execute, he appeals to him for their being in safe custody, reserved to be presented by himself. This is an inconsistency peculiar to DRYDEN, for neither PLAUTUS nor MOLIERE any where mention the present to have been sent by Sofia.

There is another inaccuracy of the same kind, which occurs both in PLAUTUS and MOLIERE. It appears in the second act, that one part of Sofia's errand was to give Alcmena a particular account of the battle; and Sofia's account of his being prevented, is so extravagant and absurd that Amphitryon cannot believe it: yet when Alcmena, in the third act, asks Amphitryon how she came to know "what he had sent Sofia to tell her," Amphitryon in astonishment seems to admit that she *could* know these particulars *only from himself*, and does not consider her question as a proof that Sofia had indeed delivered his message, though for some reasons he had pretended the contrary, and forged an incredible story to account for his neglect. As it would have been much more natural for Amphitryon, to have supposed that Sofia had told him a lie, than that Alcmena had, by a miracle, learnt what only he and Sofia could tell her, without seeing either of them; this inaccuracy is removed, by introducing such a supposition, and making the dialogue correspond with it.

In the second act, Jupiter, in the character of Amphitryon, leaves Alcmena with much reluctance, pretending haste to the camp, and great solicitude to keep his visit to her a secret from the Thebans: yet when he appears again in the third act, which he knew would be taken for the third appearance of Amphitryon, he does not account for his supposed second appearance at the return of the real Amphitryon, just after his departure,

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parture, which seems to be absolutely necessary to maintain his borrowed character consistently; and without dropping the least hint of his being no longer solicitous to conceal his excursion from the camp, he sends Sofia to invite several of the citizens to dinner.

Many other inaccuracies less considerable, and less apparent, have been removed, which it is not necessary to point out: whoever shall think it worth while diligently to compare the play as it stood, with the altered copy, can scarce fail to see the reason of the alterations as they occur.

It must be confessed, that there are still many things in *Amphitryon*, which, though I did not obliterate, I would not have written; but I think none of these are exceptionable in a moral view. There are many passages in which Lord *Amphitryon* and Lady *Alcmena* are treated by their servants with a familiarity, which is not now allowed on the greater stage of the living world; and, indeed, from this fault, I scarce know any comedy that is perfectly free: however, some of the grosser freedoms that were taken by *Phædra* with the character of Judge *Gripus*, are rejected, and this was the more necessary, as *Gripus* was *Alcmena's* uncle; and, therefore, in her presence, could not, without the utmost impropriety, be enquired after of *Amphitryon* himself, as a wretch who had grown old in the abuse of his office as a magistrate, by selling justice, and swelling his purse with bribes.

If after all it be asked, why this play was altered at all, I answer, because it might otherwise have been revived, either by other managers, or at another house, without being altered, otherwise than by being maimed: some parts, indeed, would have been left out; but as nothing would have been substituted in the stead, it would have become imperfect, in proportion as it became

P R E F A C E.

less vicious ; and would still have been so vicious in the very constituent parts, as to fully, and, perhaps, corrupt almost every mind, before which it had been represented. But though I should have been sorry to see the joint work of PLAUTUS, MOLIERE, and DRYDEN, so mutilated, as to lose that proportion of parts, by which alone those parts can constitute a whole ; yet my principal view was effectually to prevent the exhibition of it in a condition, in which it could not be safely seen : and this, I hope, will be admitted as a sufficient apology, (for my having thus employed some hours of that time which shall return no more) by those who have little regard for AMPHITRYON as a piece of ancient humour, retouched and heightened by two of the most eminent masters that modern times have produced.



P R O L O G U E.

THIS night let busy man to pleasure spare;
 Far hence be searching thought, and pining care;
 Far hence whate'er can agonize the soul,
 Grief, terror, rage, the dagger and the bowl!
 The comic Muse, a gay propitious pow'r,
 To dimpled laughter gives this mirthful hour.

The scenes which PLAUTUS drew, to-night we shew,
 Touch'd by MOLIERE, by DRYDEN taught to glow,
 DRYDEN!—in evil days his genius rose,
 When Wit and Decency were constant foes:
 Wit then desl'd in manners and in mind,
 Whene'er he sought to please disgrac'd mankind.
 Freed from his faults, we bring him to the Fair;
 And urge once more his claim to Beauty's care.
 That thus we court your praise, is praise bestow'd;
 Since all our virtue from your virtue flow'd.

But there are some——no matter where they sit—
 Who smack their lips, and hope the luscious bit.
 These claim regard, deny it they that can——
 “The Prince of Darknes is a gentleman!”
 Yet why apologize, tho' these complain;
 They're free to all the rest of Drury-Lane.

To these bright rows we boast a kind intent;
 We sought their plaudit, and their pleasure meant.
 Yet not on what we give, our fame must rise;
 In what we take away, our merit lies.
 On no new force bestow'd we found our claim;
 To make WIT HONEST, was our only aim:
 If we succeed, some praise we boldly ask—
 To make WIT HONEST is no easy task.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Jupiter,	—	At Drury Lane.	At Covent Garden.
Amphitryon,	—	Mr. REDDISH.	Mr. LEWIS.
Mercury,	—	Mr. J. AIKIN.	Mr. WROUGHTON.
Gripos,	—	Mr. JEFFERSON.	Mr. LEE LEWES.
Sofia,	—	Mr. PARSONS.	Mr. QUICK.
Phœbus,	—	Mr. KING.	Mr. WOODWARD.
Polidas,	—	Mr.	Mr.
Tranio,	—	Mr.	Mr.
Plutus,	—	Mr. CHAMPNESS.	Mr. REINHOLD.

W O M E N.

Phædra,	—	Miss POPE.	Mrs. MATTOCKS.
Alcmena,	—	Miss YOUNGE.	Mrs. HARTLEY.
Bromia,	—	Mrs. BRADSHAW.	
Night,	—	Miss PLATT.	
Wit	—		Miss DAVIS.

Scene, Thebes.

AMPHITRYON:

OR, THE

TWO S O S I A S.

ACT I.

Enter Mercury and Phœbus.

Phœb. **K** NOW you the reason of this present summons?

'Tis neither council-day, nor is this heaven:

What business has our Jupiter on earth?

Why more at Thebes than any other place?

And why are we, of all the Deities,

Selected out to meet him in consult?

They call me God of Wisdom; but the hind,

That whistling turns the furrow to my beams,

Knows full as much as I.

Merc. I have discharg'd my duty; which was to summon you, Phœbus: we shall know more anon, when the Thunderer comes down. 'Tis our part to obey our father; and here he is. [*Jupiter descends.*]

Jup. No thoughts, not ev'n of Gods, are hid from Jove:

Your doubts are all before me; but my will,

In awful darkness wrapt, no eye can reach

'Till I withdraw the veil. Yet, thus far know,

That, for the good of human kind, this night

I shall beget a future Hercules;

Who shall redress the wrongs of injur'd mortals,

Shall conquer monsters, and reform the world.

Phœb. Some mortal we presume of Cadmus' blood—
Some Theban beauty——

Jup. Yes, the fair Alcmena.

You two must be subservient to my purpose.

Amphitryon, the brave Theban general,

As

Has

Has overcome his country's foes in fight,
 And in a single duel slain their king :
 His conqu'ring troops are eager on their march,
 Returning home ; while their young general,
 More eager to review his beauteous wife,
 Posts on before, wing'd with impetuous love,
 And, by to-morrow's dawn, will reach this town.

Phæb. Then how are we to be employ'd this evening ?
 Time's precious, and these summer nights are short ;
 I must be early up to light the world.

Jup. You shall not rise ; there shall be no to-morrow.

Merc. Then the world's to be at an end, I find.

Phæb. Or else a gap in nature, of a day.

Jup. The night, if not restrain'd, too soon would
 pass ;

Too soon the dawn would bring Amphitryon back,
 Whose place I mean to hold : and sure a day,
 One day will be well lost to busy man.

Night shall continue sleep, and care suspend :
 So, many men shall live, and live in peace,
 Whom sunshine had betray'd to envious fight,
 And fight to sudden rage, and rage to death.

Phæb. I shall be curs'd by all the lab'ring trades,
 That early rise : but you must be obey'd.

Jup. No matter for the cheating part of man ;
 They have a day's sin left to answer for.

Phæb. When wou'd you have me wake ?

Jup. Your brother Mercury shall bring you word.

[Exit Phœbus.]

[To Merc.] Here have I taken Amphitryon's form :
 Thou must be Sofia, this Amphitryon's slave ;
 Who, all this night, is travelling to Thebes,
 To tell Alcmena of her lord's approach,
 And bring her joyful news of victory.

Merc. But why must I be Sofia ?

Jup. Dull God of Wit, thou statue of thyself !
 Thou must be Sofia, to keep out Sofia ;
 Whose entrance well might raise unruly noise,
 And so distract Alcmena's tender soul,
 She wou'd not meet, with equal warmth, my love.

Merc. Let me alone ; I'll cudgel him away :
 But I abhor so villainous a shape.

Jup.

Jup. Take it; I charge thee on thy duty, take it:
Nor dare to lay it down, till I command.

Night appears above in a chariot.

Look up; the Night is in her silent chariot,
And rolling just o'er Thebes: bid her drive slowly;
Or make a double turn about the world;
While I drop Jove, and take Amphitryon's form,
To be the greater, while I seem the less. [*Exit Jup.*]

Merc. [*To Night.*] Madam Night, a good even to
you! Fair and softly, I beseech you, madam: I have
a word or two to you, from no less a God than Jupiter.

Night. O, my industrious and rhetorical friend, is
it you? What makes you here upon earth at this un-
seasonable hour?

Merc. Why I'll tell you presently; but first let me
sit down, for I'm confoundedly tired.

Night. Fy, Mercury! sure your tongue runs be-
fore your wit now: does it become a God, think you,
to say that he's tired?

Merc. Why do you think the Gods are made of
iron?

Night. No; but you should always keep up your
Godship in your conversation, and leave to man-
kind the use of such vulgar words as derogate from
the dignity of immortality.

Merc. Ay, 'tis fine talking, 'faith, in that easy
chariot of yours: you have a brace of fine geldings
before you, and have nothing to do but to touch the
reins with your finger or thumb, throw yourself back
in your seat, and enjoy your ride wherever you please:
but 'tis not so with me: I, who am the messenger of
the Gods, and traverse more ground both in heaven
and earth than all of them put together, am, thanks
to Fate, the only one that is not furnish'd with a
vehicle.

Night. But if Fate has denied you a vehicle, she
has bestowed wings upon your feet.

Merc. Yes, I thank her, that I might make the
more haste; but does making more haste keep me
from being tired, d'ye think?

Night. Well, but to the business: what have you
to say to me?

Merc. Why, as I told you, I have a message from
Jupiter:

Jupiter: it is his will and his pleasure, that you muffle up this part of the world in your dark mantle, somewhat longer than usual at this time of the year.

Night. Why what is to be done now?

Merc. Done! why he is this night to be the progenitor of a Demigod, who shall destroy monsters, humble tyrants, and redress the injured; men are to become happy by his labours, and heroic by his example.

Night. Jupiter is very gracious indeed to mankind! but I am not much oblig'd to him for the honourable employment he has been pleased to assign me in this business.

Merc. Not obliged to him, madam! why so? You was always a friend to mankind, and he might reasonably think you would take pleasure in deserving their homage upon so important an occasion.

Night. Pleasure! what in taking upon me the most odious character, a character that _____

Merc. Come, come, madam, that is good of which good comes; this is a safe principle for us Deities, whatever it is for mortals, who can no more see the consequences of their own actions than what is doing behind your curtain.

Night. Sir, I beg pardon—I acknowledge, sir, that you are much better acquainted with these affairs than I am; and therefore I will e'en accept of my employment, relying wholly upon your judgment.

Merc. Not so fast, good Madam Night; none of your innuendo's, if you please: you are reported not to be so shy as you pretend; and I know that you are the trusty confidant of many a private treaty, and have as little to boast of in some particulars as I.

Night. Well, well, do not let us expose ourselves to the malicious laughter of mankind by our quarrels.

Merc. About your business then: put a spoke into your chariot-wheels, and order the Seven Stars to halt, while I put myself into the habit of a serving-man; and dress up a false Sofia, to wait upon a false Amphitryon. Good night, Night.

Night. My service to Jupiter. Farewell, Mercury.

[*Night goes backward.* Exit *Merc.*

SCENE,

SCENE, Amphitryon's palace.

Enter Alcmena alone.

Alc. Why was I marry'd to the man I love!
 For, had he been indifferent to my choice,
 Or had been hated, absence had been pleasure;
 But now I fear for my Amphitryon's life.
 At home, in private, and secure from war,
 I am amidst an host of armed foes:
 Sustaining all his cares, pierc'd with his wounds;
 And if he falls (which O ye Gods avert)
 Am in Amphitryon slain! Wou'd I were there,
 And he were here; so might we change our fates;
 That he might grieve for me, and I might die for
 him!

Enter Phædra running.

Phæd. Good news, good news, madam!—O such
 admirable news, that if I kept it in a moment, I
 shou'd burst with it!

Alc. Is it from the army?

Phæd. No matter.

Alc. From Amphitryon?

Phæd. No matter, neither.

Alc. Answer me, I charge thee, if thy good news
 be any thing relating to my lord: if it be, assure
 thyself of a reward.

Phæd. Ay, madam, now you say something to the
 matter; you know the business of a poor waiting-
 woman, here upon earth, is to be scraping up some-
 thing against a rainy day, call'd the day of marriage;
 every one in our own vocation: but what matter is it
 to me if my lord has routed the enemy, if I get no-
 thing of their spoils?

Alc. Say, is my lord victorious?

Phæd. Why, he is victorious; indeed I pray'd de-
 voutly to Jupiter for a victory; by the same token,
 that you shou'd give me ten pieces of gold, if I
 brought you news of it.

Alc. They are thine; supposing he be safe too.

Phæd. Nay, that's a new bargain; for I vow'd to
 Jupiter, that then you should give me ten pieces more.
 But I do undertake for my lord's safety; if you will
 please to discharge Jupiter of the debt, and take it
 upon you to pay.

Alc.

Alc. When he returns in safety, Jupiter and I will pay your vow.

Phæd. And I am sure I artickled with Jupiter, that if I brought you news, that my lord was upon return, you should grant me one small favour more that will cost you nothing.

Alc. Make haste, thou torturer; is my Amphitryon upon return?

Phæd. Promise me that I shall be your bedfellow to-night, as I have been ever since my lord's absence, —unless I shall be pleas'd to release you of your word.

Alc. That's a small request, 'tis granted.

Phæd. But swear by Jupiter.

Alc. I swear by Jupiter.

Phæd. Then I believe he is victorious: and I know he is safe; for I look'd through the key-hole, and saw him knocking at the gate.

Alc. And wou'dst thou not open to him? O thou traitress!

Phæd. No, I was a little wiser: I left Sofia's wife to let him in: for I was resolv'd to bring the news, and make my pennyworths out of him, as time shall show.

Enter Jupiter in the shape of Amphitryon, with Sofia's wife Bromia. He kisses and embraces Alcmena.

Jup. O let me live for ever on those lips! ———
The nectar of the Gods to these is tasteless.

I swear, that were I Jupiter, this night

I wou'd renounce my heav'n to be Amphitryon.

Alc. Then not to swear beneath Amphitryon's oath, (Forgive me, Juno, if I am profane)

I swear, I wou'd be what I am this night;

And be Alcmena, rather than be Juno.

Brom. Good, my lord, what's become of my poor bedfellow, your man Sofia? What, I say, tho' I am a poor woman, I have a husband as well as my lady.

Phæd. And what have you done with your old friend, and my old sweetheart, Judge Gripus? If he be rich, I'll make him welcome, like an honourable magistrate: but if not ———

Alc. My lord, you tell me nothing of the battle, —
Is Thebes victorious, are our foes destroy'd?

For now I find you safe, I should be glad
To hear you were in danger.

Brom. [*Pulling him on one side.*] I ask'd the first question: answer me, my lord.

Phæd. [*Pulling him on t'other side.*] Peace, mine's a lover, and yours but a husband: and my judge is my lord too; the title shall take place, and I will be answer'd.

Jup. Sofia is safe—Gripus is rich—both coming I rode before 'em with a lover's haste——

Alc. Then I, it seems, am last to be regarded?—

Jup. Not so, my love; but these obstreperous tongues Have snatch'd their answers first: they will be heard—Let us retire where none shall interrupt us; I'll tell thee there the battle and success. But I shall oft begin, and then break off; For love will often interrupt my tale, And make so sweet confusion in our talk, That thou shalt ask, and I shall answer things, That are not of a piece, but patch'd with kisses; And nonsense shall be eloquent in love.

Alc. I am the fool of love, and find within me, The fondness of a bride, without the fear. My whole desires and wishes are in you. Great Juno, thou whose holy care presides O'er wedded love, thy choicest blessings pour On this auspicious night.

Jup. Juno may grudge; for she may fear a rival In those bright eyes: but Jupiter will grant, And doubly bless this night.

Phæd. [*Aside.*] But Jupiter shou'd ask my leave first.

Alc. Bromia, prepare the chamber: The tedious journey has dispos'd my lord To seek his needful rest. [*Exit Bromia.*]

Phæd. 'Tis very true, madam; the poor gentleman must needs be weary: and, therefore, 'twas not ill-contriv'd that he must lie alone to-night.

Alc. [*To Jupiter.*] I must confess I made a kind of promise——

Phæd. [*Almost crying.*] A kind of promise, do you call it? I see you wou'd fain be coming off: I am sure you swore to me, by Jupiter, that I should be your bedfellow, and I'll accuse you to him too, the first

first prayers I make; and I'll pray on purpose too, that I will.

Jup. O, the malicious hilding!

Alc. I did swear indeed, my lord.

Jup. Forswear thyself; for Jupiter but laughs At lovers perjuries.

Phad. The more shame for him if he does.

Jup. Alcmena come, —

Alc. [*Sighing.*] She has my oath; And sure she may release it if she pleases —

Phad. Why truly, madam, I am not cruel in my nature to poor distressed lovers: for it may be my own case another day: and therefore, if my lord pleases to consider me —

Jup. Any thing, any thing! but name thy wish, and have it. —

Phad. Ay, now you say, any thing, any thing! but you wou'd tell me another story to-morrow morning. Look you, my lord, here's a hand open to receive; you know the meaning of it.

Jup. Thou shalt have all the treasury of heav'n.

Phad. Yes, when you are Jupiter to dispose of it. You have got some part of the enemies spoil I warrant you—I see a little trifling diamond upon your finger; and I am proud enough to think it would become mine too.

Jup. Here, take it.

[*Taking a ring off his finger and giving it.*]

This is a very woman:

Her sex is avarice, and she, in one,

Is all her sex.

Phad. Ay, ay, 'tis no matter what you say of us. Go, get you together, you naughty couple: to-morrow morning I shall have another fee for parting you. [*Phædra goes out before Alcmena with a light.*]

Jup. [*Solus.*] Now, for one night I leave the world to fate;

Love is alone my great affair of state.

This night let all my altars smoke in vain,

And man, unheeded, praise me or complain.

Yet if in some short intervals of rest,

By some fond youth an am'rous vow's address,

His pray'r is in an happy hour prefer'd;

And when Jove loves, a lover shall be heard. [*Exit.*]

ACT II. *A Night Scene of a Palace.*

Sofia with a dark lanthorn: Mercury in Sofia's shape, with a dark lanthorn also.

Sof. **W**AS not the devil in my master, to send me out this dreadful dark night, to bring the news of his victory to my lady? And was not I possess'd with ten devils, for going on his errand, without a convoy for the safeguard of my person? Lord, how am I melted into sweat with fear! I am diminish'd of my natural weight above two stone: I shall not bring half myself home again, to my poor wife and family. Well! the greatest plague of a serving-man is to be hir'd to some great lord! They care not what drudgery they put upon us, while they lie lolling at their ease a-bed, and stretch their lazy limbs, in expectation of the whore which we are fetching for them. The better sort of 'em will say, upon my honour, at every word: Yet ask 'em for our wages, and they plead the privilege of their honour, and will not pay us; nor let us take our privilege of the law upon them. These are a very hopeful sort of patriots, to stand up as they do for liberty and property of the subject: there's conscience for you!

Merc. [Aside.] This fellow has something of the Republican spirit in him.

Sof. [Looking about him.] Stay, this methinks shou'd be our house. And I shou'd thank the Gods now for bringing me safe home: but I think I had as good let my devotions alone, till I have got the reward for my good news, and then thank 'em once for all: for if I praise 'em before I am safe within doors, some damn'd mastiff-dog may come out and worry me; and then my thanks are thrown away upon 'em.

Merc. [Aside.] Thou art a wicked rogue, and wilt have my bargain before-hand: therefore thou get'st not into the house this night; and thank me accordingly as I use thee.

Sof. Now I am to give my lady an account of my lord's victory: 'tis good to exercise my parts before-hand,

hand, and file my tongue into eloquent expressions, to tickle her ladyship's imagination.

Merc. [*Aside.*] Good! and here's the God of Eloquence to judge of thy oration.

Sof. [*Setting down his lanthorn.*] This lanthorn, for once, shall be my lady; because she is the lamp of all beauty and perfection.

Merc. [*Aside.*] Excellent!

Sof. Then thus I make my addressees to her: [*Bows.*] Madam, my lord has chosen me out, as the most faithful, tho' the most unworthy of his followers, to bring your ladyship this following account of our glorious expedition. Then she——O my poor Sofia, [*in a shrill tone.*] how am I overjoy'd to see thee!—She can say no less——Madam, you do me too much honour, and the world will envy me this glory:—Well answer'd on my side——And how does my lord Amphitryon?——Madam, he always does like a man of courage, when he is call'd by honour.——There I think I nick'd it.——But when will he return?——As soon as possibly he can: but not so soon as his impatient heart cou'd wish him with your ladyship.

Merc. [*Aside.*] When Thebes is an university, thou deservest to be their orator.

Sof. But what does he do, and what does he say? Pr'ythee tell me something more of him——He always says less than he does, madam; and his enemies have found it to their cost——Where the devil did I learn these elegancies and gallantries?

Merc. So; he has all the natural endowments of a fop, and only wants the education!

Sof. [*Staring up to the sky.*] What, is the devil in the night? She's as long as two nights: the Seven Stars are just where they were seven hours ago! High day—high night, I mean, by my favour—What, has Phœbus been playing the good-fellow, and over-slept himself, that he forgets his duty to us mortals?

Merc. How familiarly the rascal treats us Gods! but I shall make him alter his tone immediately.

[*Mercury comes nearer, and stands just before him.*]

Sof. [*Seeing him, and starting back, aside.*] How now! What do my eyes dazzle, or is my dark lanthorn

thorn

thorn false to me? Is not that a giant before our door? or a ghost of somebody slain in the late battle? If he be, 'tis unconscionably done, to fright an honest man thus, who never drew weapon wrathfully in all his life—Whatever wight he be, I am devilishly afraid, that's certain; but 'tis discretion to keep my own counsel: I'll sing, that I may seem valiant.

[Sofia sings, and as Mercury speaks, by little and little drops his voice.]

Merc. What saucy companion is this, that deafens us with his hoarse voice? What midnight ballad-singer have we here? I shall teach the villain to leave off catterwawling.

Sof. I would I had courage, for his sake, that I might teach him to call my singing catterwawling—an illiterate rogue; an enemy to the Muses and to music!

Merc. There is an ill savour that offends my nostrils, and it wasteth this way.

Sof. He has smelt me out: my fear has betray'd me into this savour—I am a dead man! The bloody villain is at his fee, fa, fum, already.

Merc. Stand, who goes there?

Sof. A friend.

Merc. What friend?

Sof. Why a friend to all the world, that will give me leave to live peaceably.

Merc. I defy peace and all its works—My arms are out of exercise, they have maul'd nobody these three days: I long for an honourable occasion to pound a man, and lay him asleep at the first buffet.

Sof. [*Aside.*] That would almost do me a kindness; for I have been kept waking, without tipping one wink of sleep, these three nights.

Merc. Of what quality are you, fellow?

Sof. Why, I am a man, fellow—Courage Sofia!

Merc. What kind of man?

Sof. Why, a two-legg'd man, what man should I be? [*Aside.*]—I must bear up to him, he may prove as errant a milksop as myself.

Merc. Thou art a coward, I warrant thee; do not I hear thy teeth chatter in thy head?

Sof.

Sof. Ay, ay, that's only a sign they would be snapping at thy nose.—*[Aside.]* Bless me, what an arm and fist he has! with great thumbs too—and galls and knuckle-bones of a very butcher.

Merc. Sirrah, from whence come you, and whither go you? Answer me directly, upon pain of assassination.

Sof. I am coming from whence I came, and am going whither I go; that's directly home—Tho' this is somewhat an uncivil manner of proceeding, at the first sight of a man, let me tell you.

Merc. Then to begin our better acquaintance, let me first make you a small present of this box o' th' ear——

[Strikes him.]

Sof. If I were as choleric a fool as you are now, here would be fine work betwixt us two! but I am a little better bred, than to disturb the sleeping neighbourhood; and so good night, friend——*[Going.]*

Merc. *[Stopping him.]* Hold, fir, you and I must not part so easily. Once more, whither are you going?

Sof. Why I am going as fast as I can, to get out of the reach of your clutches. Let me but only knock at that door there.

Merc. What business have you at that door, sirrah?

Sof. This is our house; and when I'm got in, I'll tell you more.

Merc. Whose house is this sauciness, that you are so familiar with, to call it ours?

Sof. 'Tis mine, in the first place; and next my master's; for I lie in the garret, and he lies under me.

Merc. Have your master and you no names, sirrah?

Sof. His name is Amphitryon—hear that and tremble!

Merc. What, my lord general?

Sof. O, has his name mollify'd you! I have brought you down a peg lower already, friend.

Merc. And your name is——

Sof. Lord, friend, you are so very troublesome—what should my name be but *Sofia*?

Merc. How, *Sofia*, say you? How long have you taken up that name, sirrah?

Sof.

Sof. Here's a fine question! Why I never took it up friend; it was born with me.

Merc. What was your name born Sofia? Take this remembrance for that lye. [*Beats him.*]

Sof. Hold, friend, you are so very flippant with your hands, you won't hear reason: What offence has my name done you, that you should beat me for it? S, O, S, I, A, they are as civil, honest, harmless letters, as any are in the whole alphabet.

Merc. I have no quarrel to the name, but that 'tis e'en too good for you, and 'tis none of yours.

Sof. What, am not I Sofia, say you?

Merc. No.

Sof. I should think you are somewhat merrily disposed, if you had not beaten me into such sober sadness. You would persuade me out of my heathen name, would you?

Merc. Say you are Sofia again at your peril, sirrah.

Sof. I dare say nothing, but thought is free.—But whatever I am call'd, I am Amphitryon's man, and the first letter of my name is S too. You had best tell me that my master did not send me home to my lady, with news of his victory?

Merc. I say he did not.

Sof. Lord, lord, friend, one of us two is horribly given to lying! but I do not say which of us, to avoid contention.

Merc. I say my name is Sofia, and yours is not.

Sof. I would you could make good your words; for then I should not be beaten, and you should.

Merc. I find you would be Sofia, if you durst—but if I catch you thinking so ———

Sof. I hope I may think I was Sofia: and I can find no difference between my former self, and my present self; but that I was plain Sofia before, and now I am lac'd Sofia.

Merc. Take this, for being so impudent as to think so. [*Beats him.*]

Sof. [*Kneeling.*] Truce a little, I beseech thee! I would be a stock or a stone now by my good will, and would not think at all, for self-preservation. But will you give me leave to argue the matter fairly with you? And promise me to depose that cudgel, if I can

‘ can prove myself to be that man that I was before
 ‘ I was beaten ?

Merc. Well, proceed in safety ; I promise you I
 ‘ will not beat you.

Sof. In the first place, then, is not this town
 ‘ call’d Thebes ?

Merc. Undoubtedly.

Sof. And is not this house Amphitryon’s ?

Merc. Who denies it ?

Sof. I thought you would have deny’d that too,
 ‘ for all hang upon a string. Remember then, that
 ‘ those two preliminary articles are already granted.
 ‘ In the next place, did not the aforesaid Amphitryon
 ‘ beat the Teleboans, kill their king Pterelas, and
 ‘ send a certain servant, meaning somebody, that for
 ‘ sake-sake shall be nameless, with news of his victory,
 ‘ and of his resolution to return to-morrow ?

Merc. This is all true, to a very tittle ; but who
 ‘ is that certain servant ? there’s all the question.

Sof. Is it peace or war betwixt us ?

Merc. Peace.

Sof. I dare not wholly trust that abominable cudgel
 ‘ —but ’tis a certain friend of yours and mine, that
 ‘ had a certain name, before he was beaten out of it.’
 But if you are a man that depend not altogether upon
 force and brutality, but somewhat also upon reason,
 now do you bring better proofs that you are that same
 certain man ; and in order to it, answer me to certain
 questions.

Merc. I say I am Sofia, Amphitryon’s man : what
 ‘ reason have you to urge against it ?

Sof. What was your father’s name ?

Merc. Davus ; who was an honest husbandman,
 ‘ whose sister’s name was Harpage, that was marry’d
 ‘ and died in a foreign country.

Sof. So far you are right, I must confess ; and your
 ‘ wife’s name is —

Merc. Bromia—a devilish shrew of her tongue, and
 ‘ a vixen of her hands, that leads me a miserable life.--

Sof. By many a sorrowful token. This must be I—

Merc. I was once taken upon suspicion of bur-
 ‘ glary, and was whipt thro’ Thebes, and branded for
 ‘ my pains:

Sof.

Sof. Right me again—But if you are I, as I begin to suspect, that whipping and branding might have been past over in silence, for both our credits;—and yet, now I think on't, if I am I, (as I am I) he cannot be I. All these circumstances he might have heard; but I will now interrogate him upon some private passages. [*Aside.*]'—*Imprimis*, What was Amphitryon's share of the booty?

Merc. A buckle of diamonds, consisting of five large stones, which was worn as an ornament by Pterelas.

Sof. What does he intend to do with it?

Merc. To present it to his wife Alcmena.

Sof. And where is it now?

Merc. In a case, seal'd with my master's coat of arms.

Sof. This is prodigious, I confess!—but yet 'tis nothing, now I think on't, for some false brother may have reveal'd it to him. [*Aside.*]'—But I have another question to ask you, of somewhat that pass'd only betwixt myself and me: if you are *Sofia*, what were you doing in the heat of battle?

Merc. What a wise man should, that has a respect for his own person. I ran into our tent, and hid myself amongst the baggage.

Sof. [*Aside.*] Such another cutting answer, and I must provide myself of another name. [*To him.*] And how did you pass your time in that same tent?—You need not answer to every circumstance so exactly now; you must lie a little, that I may think you the more me.

Merc. That cunning shall not serve your turn, to circumvent me out of my name: I am for plain naked truth—There stood a hoghead of old wine, which my lord reserv'd for his own drinking——

Sof. O the devil! As sure as death, he must have hid himself in that hoghead, or he could never have known that.

Merc. And by that hoghead, upon the ground, there lay the kind inviter and provoker of good drinking——

Sof. Nay, now I have caught you—there was neither inviter nor provoker, for I was all alone.

Merc.

Merc. A lusty gammon of——

Sof. [*Sighing.*] Bacon!——That word has quite made an end of me——Let me see——this must be I, in spite of me——but let me view him nearer.

[*Walks about Mercury with his dark lanthorn.*]

Merc. What are you walking about me for, with your dark lanthorn?

Sof. No harm, friend—I am only surveying a parcel of earth here, that I find we two are about to bargain for.—[*Aside.*] He's damnable like me, that's certain. *Imprimis*, there's the patch upon my nose, with a pox to him—*Item*, a very foolish face, with a long chin at the end on't—*Item*, one pair of shambling legs, with two splay feet belonging to them.—And, *summa totalis*, from head to foot all my bodily apparel—[*To Mercury.*] Well, you are *Sofia*, there's no denying it; but what am I then? for my mind gives me, I am somebody still, if I knew but who I were.

Merc. When I have a mind to be *Sofia* no more, then thou may'st be *Sofia* again.

Sof. I have but one request more to thee——that, tho' not as *Sofia*, yet as a stranger, I may go into that house, and carry a civil message to my lady.

Merc. No, firrah; not being *Sofia*, you have no message to deliver, nor lady in this house.

Sof. Thou canst not be so barbarous, to let me lie in the streets all night, after such a journey, and such a beating—and therefore I am resolv'd to knock at the door in my own defence.

Merc. If you come near the door, I recal my word, and break off the truce——and then expect——

[*Holds up his cudgel.*]

Sof. No, the devil take me if I do expect—I have felt too well what four fruit that crab-tree bears: I'll rather beat it back upon the hoof to my lord Amphitryon, to see if he will acknowledge me for *Sofia*: if he does not, then I am no longer his slave; there's my freedom dearly purchas'd with a sore drubbing: if he does acknowledge me, then I am *Sofia* again; so far 'tis tolerably well: but then I shall have a second drubbing for an unfortunate ambassador as I am; and that's intolerable.

[*Exit Sofia.*]

Mercury

Mercury alone.

I have fobb'd off his excellency pretty well. Now let him return, and make the best of his credentials. But here comes Jupiter.

Enter Jupiter leading Alcmena, follow'd by Phædra. Pages with torches before them.

Jup. Those torches are offensive; stand aloof:

[To the Pages.

For, tho' they bless me with thy heav'nly sight,

[To her.

They may disclose the secret I would hide:
The Thebans must not know I have been here;
Detracting crowds would blame me that I stole
These happy moments from my public charge,
To consecrate to thee; and I could wish
That none were witness of the theft, but she
By whom it is approv'd——

Alc. So long an absence, and so short a stay!
What, but one night! One night of joy and love,
Could only pay one night of cares and fears;
And all the rest are an uncancell'd sum!

Jup. Alcmena, I must go.

Alc. Not yet, my lord.

Jup. Indeed I must.

Alc. Indeed you shall not go.

Jup. Behold the ruddy streaks o'er yonder hill!
Those are the blushes of the breaking morn,
That kindle day-light to this nether world.

Alc. No matter for the day, it was but made
To number out the hours of busy men.
Let 'em be busy still, and still be wretched;
And take their fill of anxious drudging day;
But we'll

Extinguish day-light, and shut out the sun.
Stay then, my lord—I'll bribe you with this kiss.

Merc. [Aside.] That's a plaguy little devil; what a roguish eye she has! I begin to like her strangely: she's the perquisite of my place too; for my lady's waiting-woman is the proper fees of my lord's chief gentleman.

B

Jup.

Jup. A bribe indeed that soon will bring me back,
Tho' now it is not possible to stay.

Alc. Not possible ! Alas, how short is life,
If we compute alone those happy hours
In which we wish to live ! Our sev'nty years
Are fill'd with pains, diseases, wants, and woes,
And only dash'd with love ; a little love !
Sprinkled by fits, and with a sparing hand.
Count all our joys from childhood ev'n to age,
They would but make a day of ev'ry year.
O ! wou'd the Gods comprise the quintessence
In sev'nty days, and take the rest away ! [mena,

Jup. By Heav'n, thy ev'ry word and look, *Alc.*
Fans the fierce flame thy charms have kindled here :
My love increas'd by thine, as fire by fire,
Mounts with more ardor in a brighter blaze.
But yet one scruple pains me at my parting ;
I love so nicely that I cannot bear
To owe my pleasures to submissive duty :
Tell me, and sooth my passion, that you give them
All to the lover, and forget the husband.

Alc. And yet, my lord, the husband's right alone
Can justify the love that burns for you :

' Nor do I suffer ought that wou'd suggest
' The scruple which your fond desire has rais'd.'

Jup. O that you lov'd like me ! then you would
A thousand, thousand niceties in love. [find

The common love of sex to sex is brutal :
But love refin'd will fancy to itself
Millions of gentle cares, and sweet disquiets :
The being happy is not half the joy ;
The manner of the happiness is all !

Alc. Confessing that you love, and are belov'd,
Rest happy in that thought ; nor wish to lose
The right that consecrates the lover's joy.

Jup. I am at once a lover and a husband :
But as a lover only am I happy ;
A lover jealous of a husband's right,
By which he scorns to claim ; whose tend'rest joy
Must all be giv'n, not paid. O ! my Alcmena,
Indulge the lover's wishes thus refin'd,

Divide

Divide him from the husband——give to each
What each requires; thy virtue to the husband,
And on the lover lavish all thy love.

Alc. I comprehend not what you mean, my lord:
But only love me still, and love me thus,
And think me such as best may please your thought.

Jup. There's mystery of love in all I say:
But duty, cruel duty, tears me from thee.
Howe'er indulge at least this small request——
When next you see your husband, dear Alcmena,
Think of your lover then.

Alc. O let me ne'er divide what Heav'n has join'd!
Husband and lover both are dear to me.

Jup. Farewel——

Alc. Farewel—but will you soon return?

Jup. I will, believe me, with a lover's haste.

[*Exeunt Jup. and Alc. severally; Phæd. follows her.*]

Merc. [*Alone.*] Now I should follow him, but Love
has laid a lime-twigg for me, and made a lame God of
me. Yet why should I love this Phædra? She's mer-
cenary, and a jilt into the bargain. Three thousand
years hence there will be a whole nation of such wo-
men, in a certain country that will be called France;
and there's a neighbour island too, where the men
will be all interest. O what a precious generation
will that be, which the men of the island shall pro-
pagate out of the women of the continent! [*Phædra
re-enters.*] And so much for prophecy; for she's here
again, and I must love her in spite of me.

Phæd. Well, Sofia, and how go matters?

Merc. Our army is victorious.

Phæd. And my servant, judge Gripus?

Merc. A voluptuous gormand.

Phæd. But has he gotten wherewithal to be volup-
tuous, is he wealthy?

Merc. He sells justice as he uses, fleeces the rich
rebels, and hangs up the poor.

Phæd. Then while he has money he may make love
to me. Has he sent me no token?

Merc. Yes, a kiss; and by the same token, I am
to give it you, as a remembrance from him.

Phæd. How now, impudence! a beggarly serving-man presume to kiss me!

Merc. Suppose I were a God, and thou'd make love to you?

Phæd. I would be first satisfy'd whether you were a poor God or a rich God.

Merc. Suppose I were Mercury, the God of merchandise?

Phæd. What, the God of small wares and fripperies, of pedlars and pilferers?

Merc. [*Aside.*] How the gipsy despises me!

Phæd. I had rather you were Plutus, the God of money, or Jupiter in a golden shower: there was a God for us women! he had the art of making love. Dost thou think that kings, or Gods either, get mistresses by their good faces? no, 'tis the gold, and the presents they can make; there's the prerogative they have over their fair subjects.

Merc. All this notwithstanding, I must tell you, pretty Phædra, I am desperately in love with you.

Phæd. And I must tell thee, ugly Sofia, thou hast not wherewithal to be in love.

Merc. Yes, a poor man may be in love, I hope.

Phæd. I grant a poor rogue may be in love, but he can never make love. Alas, Sofia, thou hast neither face to invite me, nor youth to please me, nor gold to bribe me: and besides all this, thou hast a wife—poor miserable Sofia! What ho, Bromia!

Merc. O thou merciless creature! why dost thou conjure up that spright of a wife?

Phæd. To rid myself of that devil of a poor lover. Since you are so lovingly dispos'd, I'll put you together: what Bromia, I say, make haste.

Merc. Since thou wilt call her, she shall have all the cargo I have gotten in the wars.

Phæd. Why, what have you gotten, good gentleman soldier, besides a legion of—— [*Snaps her fingers.*]

Merc. When the enemy was routed, I had the plundering of a tent.

Phæd. That's to say, a house of canvas, with moveables of straw: make haste, Bromia——

Merc. But it was the general's own tent.

Phæd. You durst not fight, I'm certain; and therefore came last in when the rich plunder was gone before-hand—Will you come, Bromia?

Merc. Pr'ythee do not call so loud—A great goblet that holds a gallon.

Phæd. Of what was that goblet made? answer quickly, for I am just calling very loud—*Bro*—

Merc. Of beaten gold—Now call aloud, if thou dost not like the metal.

Phæd. Bromia.

[*Very softly.*]

Merc. That struts in this fashion, with his arms akimbo, like a city magistrate; and a great bouncing belly, like a hostess with child of a kilderkin of wine. Now, what say you to that present, Phædra?

Phæd. Why I am considering——

Merc. What, I pr'ythee?

Phæd. Why, how to divide the business equally; to take the gift, and refuse the giver; thou art so damnably ugly, and so old.

Merc. [*Aside.*] O! that I was not confin'd to this ungodly shape to-day!

But Gripus is as old and as ugly too.

Phæd. But Gripus is a person of quality, and my lady's uncle; and if he marries me, I shall take place of my lady. Hark, your wife! she has sent her tongue before her. I hear the thunderclap already; there's a storm approaching.

Merc. Yes, of thy brewing, I thank thee for it: O how I should hate thee now, if I cou'd leave loving thee.

Phæd. Not a word of the dear golden goblet, as you hope for—you know what, Sofia.

Merc. You give me hope, then——

Phæd. Not absolutely hope neither: but gold is a great cordial in love matters; and the more you apply of it, the better——[*Aside.*] I am honest, that's certain; but when I weigh my honesty against the goblet, I am not quite resolv'd on which side the scale will turn.

[*Exit Phædra.*]

Merc. [*Aloud.*] Farewel, Phædra; remember me to my wife, and tell her——

Enter Bromia. *Thou betrayer!*

Brom. Tell her what? traitor! that you are going away without seeing her.

Merc. That I am doing my duty, and following my master.

Brom. Umph——so brisk too! Your master could leave his army in the lurch, and come galloping home at midnight, and steal to bed as quietly as any mouse, I warrant you: my master knew what belong'd to a married life; but you, firrah——you trencher-carrying rascal, you worse than dunghill-cock! that stood clapping your wings, and crowing without doors, when you should have been at roost, you villain!——

Merc. Hold your peace, dame Partlet, and leave your cackling: my master charg'd me to stand centry without doors.

Brom. My master! I dare swear thou bely'st him; my master's more a gentleman than to lay such an unreasonable command upon a poor distressed marry'd couple, and after such an absence too. No, there's no comparison between my master and thee, thou sneakby.

Merc. No more than there is betwixt my lady and you, Bromia. You and I have had our time in a civil way, spouse, and much good love has been betwixt us: but we have been marry'd fifteen years, I take it, and that hoighty-toighty business ought, in conscience, to be over.

Brom. Marry come up, my saucy companion! I am neither old, nor ugly enough to have that said to me.

Merc. But will you hear reason, Bromia? My lord and my lady are yet in a manner bride and bridegroom:—do but think in decency, what a jest it wou'd be to the family, to see two venerable old married people, ogling and leering, and sighing out fine tender things to one another.

Brom. How now, traitor, dar'st thou maintain, that I am past the age of having fine things said to me?

Merc. Not so, my dear; but certainly I am past the age of saying 'em.

Brom.

Brom. Thou deservest not to be yok'd with a woman of honour, as I am, thou perjur'd villain!

Merc. Ay, you are too much a woman of honour, to my sorrow; many a poor husband wou'd be glad to compound for less honour in his wife, and more quiet. Pr'ythee be but honest, and continent in thy tongue, and do thy worst with every thing else about thee.

Brom. Thou wou'dst have me a woman of the town, wou'dst thou? to be always speaking my husband fair, to make him digest his cuckoldom more easily; wou'dst thou be a wittal, with a vengeance to thee? I am resolv'd I'll scour thy hide for that word.

[*Holds up her ladle at him.*

Merc. Thou wilt not strike thy lord and husband, wilt thou? [*She curses him about.*] [*Aside.*] Was ever poor Deity so hen-peck'd as I am?—Nay, then, 'tis time to charm her asleep with my enchanted rod—before I am disgrac'd or ravish'd—

[*Plucks out his caduceus, and strikes her upon the shoulder with it.*]

Brom. What, art thou rebelling against thy anointed wife? I'll make thee—How now!—What, has the rogue bewitch'd me! I grow dull and stupid on the sudden—I can neither stir hand nor foot—[*Yawning.*]—I can't so much as wag my tongue—neither; and that's the last living part about a—woman—

[*Falls down.*

Merc. Lord, what have I suffer'd, for being but a counterfeit marry'd man one day! If ever I come to his house, as a husband again—then—And yet that then was a lye too—For while I am in love with this young gipsy Phædra, I must return—But lie thou there, thou type of Juno; thou that want'st nothing of her tongue but the immortality. If Jupiter ever let thee set foot where she is, Juno will have a rattling second of thee.

For two such tongues will break the poles asunder; And, hourly scolding, make perpetual thunder.

[*Exit Mercury.*

ACT III. SCENE *before Amphitryon's Palace.**Amphitryon and Sosa.*

Amph. **N**OW, firrah, follow me into the house —thou shalt be convinc'd at thy own cost, villain! What horrible lies hast thou told me! such improbabilities, such stuff, such nonsense! —

Sof. I am but a slave, and you are master; and a poor man is always to lye, when a rich man is pleas'd to contradict him: but as sure as this is our house —

Amph. So sure 'tis thy place of execution.

Sof. Hold, dear sir! if I must have a second beating, in conscience let me strip first, that I may show you the black and blue streaks upon my sides and shoulders. I am sure I suffer'd them in your service.

Amph. To what purpose wou'dst thou show them?

Sof. Why, to the purpose that you may not strike me upon the fore places; and that as he beat me the last night cross-ways, so you wou'd please to beat me long-ways, to make clean work on't, that at least my skin may look like chequer-work.

Amph. This request is too reasonable to be refus'd: but, that all things may be done in order, tell me over-again the same story, with all the circumstances of thy commission; that a blow may follow in due form for every lye. To repetition, rogue, to repetition.

Sof. No, it shall be all a lye, if you please; and I'll eat my words to save my shoulders.

Amph. Ay, firrah, now find you are to be disprov'd: but 'tis too late: to repetition, rogue, to repetition.

Sof. With all myheart, to any repetition but the cudgel. But wou'd you be pleas'd to answer me one civil question? Am I to use complaisance to you, as to a great person, that will have all things said your own way; or am I to tell you the naked truth alone, without the ceremony of a farther beating?

Amph.

Amph. Nothing but the truth, and the whole truth; so help thee cudgel——

Sof. That's a damn'd conclusion of a sentence; but since it must be so——back and sides, at your own peril——I set out from the port in an unlucky hour; I went darkling and whistling, to keep myself from being afraid; mumbling curses betwixt my teeth, for being sent at such an unnatural time of night.

Amph. How, sirrah, cursing and swearing against your lord and master! take—— [Going to strike.

Sof. Hold, sir——pray consider, if this be not unreasonable, to strike me for telling the whole truth, when you commanded me: I'll fall into my old dog-trot of lying again, if this must come of plain dealing.

Amph. To avoid impertinencies, make an end of your journey, and come to the house; what found you there?

Sof. I found before the door a swinging fellow, with all my shapes and features, and accoutred also in my habit.

Amph. Who was that fellow?

Sof. Who shou'd it be but another Sofia! a certain kind of other me; who knew all my unfortunate commission, precisely to a word, as well as I Sofia; as being sent by yourself from the port, upon the same errand to Alcmena.

Amph. What gross absurdities are these?

Sof. O Lord, O Lord! what absurdities? as plain as any packstaff. That other Me, had posted himself there before Me, Me.—You won't give a man leave to speak poetically now, or else I wou'd say, that I was arriv'd at the door just before I came thither.

Amph. This must either be a dream, or drunkenness, or madness in thee. Leave your buffooning and lying. I am not in humour to bear it, sirrah.

Sof. I wou'd you shou'd know I scorn a lye, and am a man of honour in every thing but just fighting. I tell you 'once again,' in plain sincerity and simplicity of heart, that before last night, I never took

myself but for one single individual Sofia; but coming to our door, I found myself, I know not how, divided, and, as it were, split into two Sofias.

Amph. Leave buffooning: I see you wou'd make me laugh, but you play the fool scurvily.

Sof. That may be: but if I am a fool, I am not the only fool in this company.

Amph. How now, impudence! I shall——

Sof. Be not in wrath, sir; I meant not you, I cannot possibly be the only fool; for if I am one fool, I must certainly be two fools; because, as I told you, I am double.

Amph. That one should be two is very probable!—A man had need of patience to endure this gibberish—be brief, and come to a conclusion——

Sof. What wou'd you have, sir? I came thither, but the t'other I was there before me; for that there were two I's is as certain, as that I have two eyes in this head of mine. This *I*, that am here, was weary; the t'other *I* was fresh: this *I* was peaceable, and t'other *I* was a hectoring bully *I*.

Amph. And thou expect'st I shou'd believe thee?

Sof. No, I am not so unreasonable; for I cou'd never have believ'd it myself, if I had not been well beaten into it: but a cudgel, you know, is a convincing argument in a brawny fist. What shall I say, but that I was compell'd at last to acknowledge myself? I found that he was very *I*, without fraud, cozen, or deceit. Besides, I view'd myself, as in a mirror, from head to foot—he was handsome, of a noble presence, a charming air, loose and free in all his motions—and saw he was so much *I*, that I shou'd have reason to be better satisfied with my own person, if his hands had not been a little of the heaviest.

Amph. No more of your nonsense—say you pass'd by him, and enter'd into the house.

Sof. I am a friend to truth, and say no such thing: he defended the door, and I could not enter.

Amph. How, not enter!

Sof. Why, how shou'd I enter? unless I were a spright

spright to glide by him, and shoot myself through locks, and bolts, and two-inch boards?

Amph. O coward, didst thou not attempt to pass?

Sof. Yes, and was repuls'd, and beaten for my pains.

Amph. Who beat thee?

Sof. I beat Me.

Amph. Didst thou beat thyself?

Sof. I don't mean *I* here; but the absent *Me* beat me here present.

Amph. There's no end of this intricate piece of nonsense.

Sof. 'Tis only nonsense, because I speak it who am a poor fellow; but it wou'd be sense, and substantial sense, if a great man said it, that was back'd with a title, and the eloquence of ten thousand pounds a year.

Amph. No more—but let us enter. Hold, my Alcmena is coming out, and has prevented me! how strangely will she be surpriz'd to see me here so unexpectedly!

Enter Alcmena and Phædra.

Alc. [*To Phæd.*] Make haste after me to the temple; that we may thank the Gods for this glorious success, which Amphitryon has had against the rebels. O heaven!

Amph. Those heav'ns, and all the blest inhabitants,
[*Saluting her.*

Grant, that the sweet rewarder of my pains

May still be kind, as on our nuptial night.

Alc. So soon return'd!

Amph. So soon return'd! Is this my welcome home?

[*Stepping back.*

So soon return'd, says I am come unwish'd!

This is no language of desiring love:

Love reckons hours for months, and days for years;

And every little absence is an age.

Alc. What says my lord?

Amph. No, my Alcmena, no:

True love by its impatience measures time,

And the dear object never comes too soon.

Alc. Nor ever came you so, nor ever shall;
But you yourself are chang'd from what you were,
Pall'd in desires, and surfeited of bliss;
Not such as when last night at your return
I flew with transport to your clasping arms.

Amph. How's this?

Alc. Did you not read your welcome in my eyes?
Did you not hear it in my falt'ring voice?
Did not the pleasing tumult shake my frame,
'Nature's spontaneous proof of sudden joy'
Which no false love can feign!

Amph. What's this you tell me?

Alc. Far short of truth, by Heav'n!
My proofs of joy, with joy you then receiv'd,
And gave with usury back. At break of day
You left me with a sigh; you now return,
Tho' not unwish'd, yet surely unexpected;
And why shou'd my surprize be thought a crime?

Amph. I left you with a sigh at break of day! —

Alc. Yes, for the camp——have you forgot, Am-
phitryon?

Amph. Or have you dreamt, Alcmena?
Perhaps some kind, revealing Deity,
Has whisper'd in your sleep the pleasing news
Of my return; and you believ'd it real.

Alc. Some melancholy vapour, sure, has seiz'd
Your brain, Amphitryon, and disturb'd your sense:
Or yesternight is not so long a time,
But you might yet remember
How kind a welcome to my arms I gave you.

Amph. I thank you for my melancholy vapour.

Alc. 'Tis but a just requital for my dream.

Phed. If my master thinks fit thus to angle for a
quarrel, I think he had no great reason to come back.
[In the mean time *Amph.* and *Alc.* walk by themselves,
and frown at each other as they meet.]

Amph. You dare not justify it to my face.

Alc. Not what?

Amph. That I return'd before this hour.

Alc. You dare not, sure, deny you came last night,
And staid till break of day.

Amph.

Amph. O impudence!—why, Sofia!

Sof. Nay, I say nothing; for all things here may go by enchantment (as they did with me) for ought I know.

Alc. Speak, Phædra, was he here?

Phæd. You know, madam, I am but a chamber-maid: and by my place, I am to forget all that was done over night in love matters——unless my master pleases to rub up my memory with another diamond.

Amph. Now, in the name of all the Gods, Alcmena, A little recollect your scatter'd thoughts, And weigh what you have said.

Alc. I weigh'd it well, Amphitryon, ere I spoke; And she, and Bromia, all the slaves and servants, Can witness they beheld you when you came: If other proof be wanting, tell me how I came to know your fight, your victory, The death of Pterelas in single combat?——

Amph. [turning angrily to Sofia.] Now, rascal!— you did not get into the house And deliver my message, did you?

[Going to strike him.

Sof. Hold, sir, for the sake of truth and mercy! —Dear madam! [to Alcmena.] as your gentle nature is a friend to distressed innocence, interpose in my behalf.

Alc. [to Amph.] Why will you not, Amphitryon, answer me? What in my question can have turn'd your rage On this poor slave?

Amph. What but gross falshoods, which he forg'd to mock me: And you abet him——But for this——

[Is again going to strike Sofia:

Sof. Nay, dear sir, do not punish me unheard.

Amph. Did you not tell me——

Sof. Yes, I did tell you—and I told you truly, that when I would have gone into the house, I was beaten away.

Amph. Well, sirrah, and don't it now appear, by what Alcmena says, that you did get in? how else could she know the news I sent you with, rascal?

Sof.

Sof. And don't it appear, by my back and shoulders, that I was beaten away? but you will not let a man produce his witnesses——

Amph. Did you not get in? Answer me that, rogue, directly, and without equivocation.

Sof. Why yes, it is true—and I must confess that, in some sense, it may be said that I *did* get in; tho' it may also, in a certain sense, be truly said, that I was beaten away.

Amph. Why thou impudent, prevaricating——

Sof. Sir, let me beseech you, that reason may predominate, for my sake, and that you would make such distinctions as the nature of my case requires: it is true that I *did* get in, and it is true that I did *not* get in; this *I*, that is here now, did not get in, but was beaten away by t'other *I*; but that other *I* did get in, and was not beaten away—there is a *me* me, and there is a *be* me——

Amph. Audacious slave! 'twere infamy to spare thee.

Phæd. Do, my lord, pray spare him, till he has told the rest of his story; it is but beating him a little the more, when he has done.

Sof. [*Earnestly to Phædra.*] It was at that very door, there it is—here was one *I*, and there was t'other.

Phæd. What, you mean that you squinted, and look'd two ways at once.

Sof. I mean no such thing—[*He now turns from her, and addresses Alcmena.*] It is not easy to make one's self understood in these nice cases: but I say, —hem! 'I say, that I being become the duplicate of myself, as to the body, and the understanding, did notwithstanding find that there was a diversity of the will, and that both in action and in sufferance'——

Amph. [*Fiercely pulling him away.*] Be gone—thy folly tortures me to madness.

Alc. [*Interposing.*] The same strange phrensy has possess'd you both;

It was from you, not him, I heard the news.

Amph. From me!

Alc.

Alc. From you—and when you told me Pterelas's death,

You gave this jewel which he us'd to wear.

Amph. This is amazing!

Have I already given you those diamonds,

The present I reserv'd?

Alc. 'Tis an odd question:

You see I wear 'em: look.

Amph. Now answer, Sofia.

Sof. Yes, now I can answer with a safe conscience, as to that point; all the rest may be art magic—but, as for the diamonds, here they are, under safe custody.

Alc. Then what are these upon my arm? [*To Sof.*

Sof. Flints, or pebbles, or some such trumpery of enchanted stones. Yet now I think on't, madam, did not a certain friend of mine present 'em to you?

Alc. What friend?

Sof. Why another Sofia; one that made himself Sofia in my despite, and also Unsofiated me.

Amph. Sirrah, leave your nauseous nonsense; break open the seal, and take out the diamonds.

Sof. More words than one to a bargain, sir, I thank you: that's no part of prudence for me to commit burglary upon the seals. Do you look first upon the signet, and tell me in your conscience, whether the seals be not as firm as when you clapt the wax upon them.

Amph. The signature is firm. [*Looking.*

Sof. Then take the signature into your own custody, and open it, for I will have nothing done at my proper peril. [*Giving him the casket.*

Amph. [*Breaking open the seal.*] O Heav'ns! here's nothing but an empty space, the nest where they were laid.

Sof. Then if the birds are flown, the fault's not mine. Here has been fine conjuring work! or else the jewel, knowing to whom it shou'd be given, took occasion to steal out, by a natural instinct, and ty'd itself to that pretty arm.

Amph. Can this be possible?

Sof.

Sof. Yes, very possible: You, my lord Amphitryon, may have brought forth another You my lord Amphitryon; as well as I Sofia have brought forth another Me Sofia; and our diamonds may have procreated these diamonds; and so we are all three double.

Phæd. If this be true, I hope my golden goblet has giv'd another golden goblet, and then they may carry double upon all four. *[Aside.]*

Alc. My lord, I have stood silent out of wonder What you cou'd wonder at.

Amph. *[Aside.]* A chilling sweat, a damp of jealousy, Hangs on my brows, and clams upon my limbs. I fear, and yet I must be satisfy'd: And to be satisfy'd, I must dissemble.

Alc. Why muse you so, and murmur to yourself? If you repent your bounty, take it back.

Amph. Not so; but, if you please, relate what past At our last interview.

Alc. That question wou'd infer you were not here.

Amph. I say not so;

I only wou'd refresh my memory,
And have my reasons to desire the story.

Alc. The story is not long: you know I met you, Kiss'd you, and press'd you close within my arms.

Amph. I cou'd have spar'd that kindness. *[Aside.]*
And what did I? *[To her.]*

Alc. With equal love return'd my warm embrace.

Amph. Go on.——

[Aside.] And stab me with each syllable thou speak'st.

Alc. I have no more to say.

Amph. Why, went we not to bed?

Alc. Why not?

'Is it a crime for husband and for wife

'To go to bed, my lord?'

Amph. Perfidious woman!

Alc. Ungrateful man!

Amph. She justifies it too!

Alc. I need not justify: of what am I accus'd?

Amph. Of that prodigality of kindness
Giv'n to another, and usurp'd from me.
So bless me, Heav'n, if since my first departure,
I ever set my foot upon this threshold.

Alc.

Alc. Then I, it seems, am false!

Amph. As surely false, as what thou say'st is true.

Alc. I have betray'd my honour, and my love!
And am a foul adultress!

Amph. What thou art,
Thou stand'st condemn'd to be by thy relation.

Alc. Go, thou unworthy man; for ever go:

No more my husband! Go, thou base impostor;

Who tak'st a vile pretence to taint my fame;

And, not content to leave, would'st ruin me.

Enjoy thy wish'd divorce: I will not plead

My innocence of this pretended crime:

I need not: do thy worst, I fear thee not:

For know, the more thou wou'dst expose my virtue,

Like purest linen laid in open air,

'Twill bleach the more, and whiten to the view.

Amph. 'Tis well thou art prepar'd for thy divorce:

For, know thou too, that after this affront,

This foul indignity done to my honour,

Divorcement is but petty reparation.

But since thou hast, with impudence, affirm'd

My false return, and brib'd my slaves to vouch it,

The truth shall, in the face of Thebes, be clear'd;

Thy uncle, the companion of my voyage,

And all the crew of seamen shall be brought,

Who were embark'd, and came with me to land,

Nor parted, till I reach'd this cursed door:

So shall this vision of my late return

Stand a detected lye; and woe to those

Who thus betray'd my honour.

Sof. Sir, shall I wait on you?

Amph. No, I will go alone: expect me here:

[Exit Amphitryon.

Phæd. Please you—that I—— [To Alcmena.

Alc. O! nothing now can please me:

Darkness, and solitude, and sighs, and tears,

And all th' inseparable train of grief,

Attend my steps for ever—— [Exit Alcmena.

Sof. What if I shou'd lye now, and say we have
been here before? I never saw any good that came of
telling truth.

[Aside.

Phæd.

Phæd. He makes no more advances to me! I begin a little to suspect, that my gold goblet will prove but copper.

Sof. Yes, 'tis resolv'd—I will lye abominably, against the light of my own conscience. For suppose the other Sofia has been here: perhaps that strong dog has not only beaten me, but also has misus'd my wife! Now, by asking certain questions of her, with a side-wind, I may come to understand how squares go; and whether my nuptial bed be violated. [*Aside.*

Phæd. Most certainly he has learn'd impudence of his master, and will deny his being here; but that shall not serve his turn, to cheat me of my present—

Why, Sofia! What in a brown study? [*Aside.*

Sof. A little *cogitabund*, or so, concerning this dismal revolution in our family.

Phæd. But that shou'd not make you neglect your duty to me your mistress.

Sof. Pretty soul, I wou'd thou wert; upon condition that old Bromia were six foot under ground.

Phæd. What! is all your hot courtship to me dwindled into a poor unprofitable wish? You may remember, I did not bid you absolutely despair.

Sof. No, for all things yet may be accommodated in an amicable manner, betwixt my master and my lady.

Phæd. I mean, to the business betwixt you and me——

Sof. Why, I hope we two never quarrell'd.

Phæd. Must I remember you of a certain promise that you made me at our last parting?

Sof. O, when I went to the army; that I shou'd still be praising thy beauty to judge Gripus, and keep up his affections to thee.

Phæd. No, I mean the business betwixt you and me this morning—that you promis'd me——

Sof. That I promis'd thee—I find it now: that strong dog, my brother Sofia, has been here before me, and made love to her.

Phæd. You are considering, whether or no you should keep your promise——

Sof.

Sof. No, sweet creature, the promise shall not be broken: but what I have undertaken, I will perform like a man of honour.

Phed. Then you remember the preliminaries of the present.—

Sof. Yes, yes, in gross I do remember something; but this disturbance of the family has somewhat stupify'd my memory: some pretty *quelque chose*, I warrant thee, some acceptable toy of small value.

Phed. You may call a gold goblet a toy: but I put a greater value upon your presents.

Sof. A gold goblet, say'st thou! Yes, now, I think on't, it was a kind of a gold goblet, as a gratuity—

Phed. No, no; I had rather make sure of one bribe before-hand, than be promis'd ten gratuities.

Sof. Yes, now I remember, it was, in some sense, a gold goblet, by way of earnest; and it contain'd—

Phed. One large—

Sof. How, one large—

Phed. Gallon.

Sof. No, that was somewhat too large, in conscience: it was not a whole gallon; but it may contain, reasonably speaking, one large—thimble-full. But gallons and thimble-fulls are so like, that, in speaking, I might easily mistake them.

Phed. Is it come to this? Out, traitor!

Sof. I had been a traitor, indeed, to have betray'd thee to the swallowing of a gallon; but a thimble-full of cordial-water is easily sipt off: and then, this same goblet is so very light too, that it will be no burden to carry it about with thee in thy pocket.

Phed. O apostate to thy love! O perjur'd villain! [*Enter Bromia.*] What are you here, Bromia! I was telling him his own: I was giving him a rattle for his treacheries to you, his love; you see I can be a friend, upon occasion.

Brom. Ay chicken, I never doubted of thy kindness: but for this fugitive—this rebel—this miscreant—

Sof. A kind welcome to an absent lover, as I have been.

—*Brom.*

Brom. Ay, and a kind greeting you gave me, at your return; when you us'd me so barbarously this morning.

Sof. Ay, the t'other Sofia has been with her too; and has us'd her barbarously: barbarously, that is to say uncivilly; and uncivilly, I am afraid that means too civilly. [*Aside.*]

Phæd. You had best deny you were here this morning! And by the same token——

Sof. Nay, no more tokens, for Heav'n's sake, dear Phædra. Now must I again ponder with myself a little, whether it be better for me to have been here, or not to have been here this morning. [*Aside.*]

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Phædra, my lord's without; and will not enter till he has first spoken with you, [*Exit Servant.*]

Phæd. [*To him in private.*] O, that I cou'd stay, to help to worry thee for this abuse; but the best on't is, I leave thee in good hands——Farewel thimble——To him, Bromia. [*Exit Phædra.*]

Brom. No, to be sure you did not beat me, and put me into a swoon, and deprive me of the natural use of my tongue, for a long half hour: you did not beat me down with your little wand: but I shall teach you to use your rod another time——I shall

Sof. Put her into a swoon with my little wand, and so forth: that's more than ever I could do. These are terrible circumstances, that some Sofia or other has been here. [*Aside.*] Well, but Bromia—if I did beat thee down with my little wand, I warrant, I was monstrous kind to thee 'afterwards.'

Brom. Yes, monstrous kind indeed! You never said a truer word; for when I came to kiss you, you pull'd away your mouth, and turn'd your cheek to me.

Sof. Goed.

Brom. How, good! Here's fine impudence: what, do you insult upon me too?

Sof. No, I do not insult upon you—but for a certain reason, that I best know, I am glad that matter ended so fairly and peaceably betwixt us.

Brom.

Brom. Yes, 'twas very fair and peaceably ; to strike a woman down, and beat her most outrageously.

Sos. Is it possible that I drubb'd thee ?

Brom. I find your drift——You wou'd fain be provoking me to a new trial now : but i'faith, you shall bring me to no more handy-blows—I shall make bold to trust to my tongue hereafter. You never durst have offer'd to hold up a finger against me, till you went a trooping.

Sos. Then I am conqueror ; and I laud my own courage. This renown I have atchiev'd by soldiership and stratagem. Know your duty, spouse, henceforward, to your supreme commander. [Strutting.

Enter Jupiter and Phædra.

Phæd. Indeed I wonder'd at your quick return.

Jup. Ev'n so, Almighty Love wou'd have it, Phædra ;

' And the stern Goddess of sweet-bitter cares,
' Who bows our necks beneath her brazen yoke,'
I wou'd have mann'd my heart, and held it out :
But, when I thought of what I had possess'd ;
Those joys, that never end but to begin,
My duty soon was overborne : I scorn'd
The busy malice of censorious tongues,
And, careless to conceal my stolen journey,
Determin'd one day more to spend in Thebes.

Phæd. And yet a second time you left Alcmena,
With looks unkind, that threaten'd longer absence,
'Twas but ev'n now——

Jup. Wou'd it had never been !
I die to make my peace.

Phæd. 'Tis difficult.

Jup. But nothing is impossible to love :
To love like mine : for I have prov'd its force.
If I submit, there's hope.

Phæd. It is possible I may solicit for you.

Jup. But wilt thou promise me to do thy best ?

Phæd. Nay, I promise nothing—unless you begin
To promise first. [Curt'sying.

Jup. I wo'not be ungrateful.

Phæd. Well, I'll try to bring her to you.

Jup.

Jup. That's all I ask : last words, follow.
And I will so reward thee, gentle Phædra—

Phæd. What with the sweet sound of gentle Phædra,
and my kind advocate.—

Jup. No, there's a sound will please thee better.

[Throwing her a purse.]

Phæd. Ay, there's something of melody in this
sound.

I could dance all day to the music of *chink, chink.*

[Exit Phæd.]

Jup. Go, Sofia,

To Polidas, to Tranio, and to Gripus,

Companions of our war : invite 'em all

To join their pray'rs to smoothe Alcmena's brow ;

And, with a solemn feast, to crown the day.

Sof. *[Taking Jupiter about the knees.]* Let me embrace you, sir.—*[Jupiter pushes him away.]* Nay, you must give me leave to express my gratitude. I have not eaten, to say eating, nor drunk, to say drinking, never since our villainous encamping so near the enemy.

Jup. You, Bromia, see that all things be prepar'd
With that magnificence, as if Jupiter
Were guest or master here.

Sof. Or, rather, as much as if twenty Jupiters
were to be guests, or masters here.

Brom. That you may eat for to-day and to-morrow.

Sof. Or, rather again, for to-day, and yesterday ;
and as many months backward, as I am indebted to
my own stomach.

Jup. Away, both of you.

[Exeunt Sofia and Bromia severally.]

Now I have pack'd him hence, thou other Sofia,

(Who, tho' thou art not present, hear'st my voice)

Be ready to attend me at my call,

And to supply his place.

Enter Mercury to Jupiter ; Alcmena and Phædra also enter, but Alcmena seeing Jupiter, turns back, and retires frowning.

Jup. See, she appears ! *[Seeing Alcmena O' stay.]*

Merc. She's gone, and seem'd to frown at partin

Jup. Follow, and thou shalt see her soon appear'd ;
 For I, who made her, know her inward state :
 No woman, once well-pleas'd, can thoroughly hate.
 I gave 'em Beauty, to subdue the Strong ;
 (A mighty empire, but it lasts not long.)
 I gave 'em Pride, to make Mankind their slave ;
 But, in exchange, to Men I Flattery gave.
 Th' offending Lover, when he lowest lies,
 Submits to conquer, and but kneels, to rise.

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T IV.

Jupiter following Alcmena ; Mercury, and Phædra.

Jup. O Stay, my dear Alcmena, hear me speak.

Alc. No, I wou'd fly thee to the ridge
 of earth ;

And leap the precipice to 'scape thy fight.

Jup. For pity——

Alc. Leave me, thou ungrateful man !

I hate myself, for having lov'd thee once.

Jup. Hate not the best and fairest of your kind :

Nor can you hate your lover, tho' you wou'd.

Your tears, that fall so gently, are but grief :

There may be anger ; but there must be love.

The dove that murmurs at her mate's neglect,

But counterfeits a coyness to be courted.

Alc. Courtship from thee, and after such affronts !

Jup. Is this that everlasting love you vow'd, last
 night ?

Alc. Think what thou wert, and who cou'd swear
 too much ?

Think what thou art, and that absolves the oath.

Jup. Can you forsake me for so small a fault ?

'Twas but a jest, perhaps too far pursu'd ;

'Twas but, at most, a trial of your faith,

How you could bear unkindness :

'Twas but to get a reconciling kiss,

A wanton stratagem of love.

Alc. See how he doubles, like a hunted hare !

A jest, and then a trial, and a bait ;——

Jup.

Jup. Think me jealous, then.

Alc. O that I could, for that's a noble crime;
And which a lover can, with ease, forgive:
'Tis the high pulse of passion, in a fever;
A sickly draught but shews a burning thirst:
Thine was a surfeit, not a jealousy:
And in that loathing of thy satiate love,
Thou saw'st the odious object with disdain.

Jup. O think not that: for you are ever new——
' Your fruits of love, like those of endless spring
' In happy climes, where some are in the bud,
' Some green, and ripening some, while others fall.

Alc. Ay, now you tell me this. Your puny passion,
' Like the deprav'd desires of fretful sickness,
' Raves in short fits of craving and disgust:
' This morn at break of day you wou'd be gone;
' Then chang'd your purpose and came back; then
rag'd

' Because th' effect of chance was not foreseen;
' Then left me in disgust, with insult too;
' And now, return'd again, you talk of love.
' But never hope to be receiv'd again:
' You would again deny you were receiv'd,
' And brand my spotless fame.'

Jup. I will not dare to justify my crime:
No, I confess I have deserv'd your hate.
Too charming fair, I kneel for your forgiveness:
I beg by those fair eyes, [Kneeling.
Which gave me wounds that time can never cure;
Receive my sorrows, and restore my joys.

Alc. Unkind and cruel! I can speak no more.

Jup. O give it vent, Alcmena, give it vent;
I merit your reproach, I wou'd be curs'd:
Let your tongue curse me, while your heart forgives.

Alc. Can I forget such usage?

Jup. Can you hate me?

Alc. I'll do my best: for sure I ought to hate you.

Jup. That word was only hatch'd upon your tongue
' It came not from your heart. But try again;
' And if, once more, you can but say, I hate you,
' My sword shall do you justice.

Alc.

Alc. Then, I hate you——

Jup. Then you pronounce the sentence of my death?

Alc. I hate you much;—but yet I love you more.

Jup. To prove that love, then say, that you for—
 For there remains but this alternative; [give me :
 Resolve to pardon, or to punish me.

Alc. Alas, what I resolve, appears too plain :
 In saying that I cannot hate, I pardon.

Jup. But what's a pardon worth, without a seal?
 Permit me, in this transport of my joy——

[*Kisses her hand.*]

Alc. Forbear; I am offended with myself,
 [Putting him gently away with her hand.
 That I have shewn this weakness——Let me go.
 [Going and looking back on him.

But come not you;
 Lest I should spoil you with excess of fondness,
 And let you love again—— [Exit Alcmena.

Jup. Forbidding me to follow, she invites me.

[*Aside.*]

This is the mould of which I made the sex :
 I gave 'em but one tongue, to say us nay;
 And two kind eyes, to grant. Be sure that none
 [To Merc.

Approach, to interrupt us.

[Exit Jupiter after Alcmena.

Mercury and Phædra remain.

Merc. Your lady has made the challenge of recon-
 ciliation to my lord: here's a fair example for us two,
 Phædra.

Phæd. No example at all, Sofia: for my lady had
 the diamonds before-hand, and I have none of the
 gold goblet.

Merc. The goblet shall be forth-coming, if thou
 wilt give me weight for weight.

Phæd. Yes, and measure for measure too, Sofia:
 that is, for a thimble-full of gold, a thimble-full of
 love.

Merc. What think you now, Phædra? Here's a
 weighty argument of love for you!

[Pulling out the goblet in a case from under his cloak.

C

Phæd.

Phæd. Now Jupiter of his mercy, let me kiss thee,
O thou dear metal! [*Taking it in both hands.*]

Merc. And Venus, of her mercy, let me kiss thee,
dear, dear Phædra.

Phæd. Not so fast, Sofia! there's an unlucky
proverb in your way—*Many things happen betwixt the
cup and the lip*, you know.

Merc. Why, thou wilt not cheat me of my goblet?

Phæd. Yes; 'as sure as you would cheat me of any
'maidenhead:' I am yet but just even with you, for
the last trick you play'd me. And, besides, this is
but a bare retaining fee; you must give me another
before the cause is open'd.

Merc. Shall I not come to your bed-side to-night?

Phæd. No, nor to-morrow night neither: but this
shall be my sweetheart in your place: 'tis a better
bedfellow, and will keep me warmer in cold weather.

[*Exit Phædra.*]

Mercury alone.

Merc. Now, what's the God of Wit in a woman's
hand? This very goblet I stole from Gripus; and he
got it out of bribes too. But this is the common fate
of ill-gotten goods, that, as they came in by cove-
tousness, they go out by whoring.—[*Enter Am-
phitryon.*]*—*'O here's Amphitryon again, but I'll
'manage him above in the balcony.'
[*Exit Merc.*]

Amph. Not one of those I look'd for, to be found!
Has some enchantment hid 'em from my sight?
Perhaps, as Sofia says, 'tis witchcraft all:
Seals may be open'd, diamonds may be stoln;
But how I came in person, yesterday,
And gave that present to Alcmena's hands,
That which I never gave, nor ever came,
O there's the rock, on which my reason splits.
Wou'd that were all! I fear my honour, too!
I'll try her once again: she may be mad:—
A wretched remedy! but all I have,
To keep me from despair.

How now! what means the locking up of my
Doors at this time of day?

[*Knocks.*]

Merc. [*Above.*] Softly, friend, softly! You knock

as

as loud, and as saucily, as a lord's footman, that was sent before him, to warn the family of his lordship's visit. Sure, you think the doors have no feeling! What the devil are you that rap with such authority?

Amph. Look out, and see: 'tis I.

Merc. You? what you?

Amph. No more, I say, but open.

Merc. I'll know to whom first.

Amph. I am one that can command the doors open.

Merc. Then you had best command them, and try whether they will obey you.

Amph. Dost thou not know me?

Merc. Pr'ythee, how should I know thee? dost thou take me for a conjurer?

Amph. What's this, midsummer-moon? Is all the world gone a madding? Why Sofia!

Merc. That's my name indeed: didst thou think I had forgot it?

Amph. Dost thou see me?

Merc. Why, dost thou pretend to go invisible? If thou hast any business here, dispatch it quickly; I have no leisure to throw away upon such prattling companions.

Amph. Thy companion, slave? How dar'st thou use this insolent language to thy master?

Merc. How! Thou my master? By what title? I never had any other master, but Amphitryon.

Amph. Well: and for whom dost thou take me?

Merc. For some rogue or other; but what rogue I know not.

Amph. Dost thou not know me for Amphitryon, slave!

Merc. How shou'd I know thee, when I see thou dost not know thyself? Thou Amphitryon? In what tavern hast thou been? and how many bottles did thy business, to metamorphose thee into my lord?

Amph. I will so drub thee for this insolence!

Merc. How now, impudence! are you threatening your betters? I shou'd bring you to condign punishment, but that I have a great respect for the good wine, tho' I find it in a fool's noddle.

Amph. What, none to let me in? Why Phædra! Bromia!

Merc. Peace, fellow; if my wife hears thee, we are both undone. At a word, Phædra and Bromia are very busy; and my lady and my lord must not be disturbed.

Amph. Amazement seizes me!

Merc. At what art thou amaz'd? My Lord Amphitryon and my Lady Alcmena had a falling out, and are retir'd, without seconds, to decide the quarrel. If thou wert not a meddlesome fool, thou wouldst not be thrusting thy nose into other peoples matters. Get thee about thy business, if thou hast any; for I'll hear no more of thee. [*Exit Mercury from above.*]

Amph. Brav'd by my slave, dishonour'd by my wife! To what a desp'rate plunge am I reduc'd, If this be true the villain says? But why That feeble If? It must be true; she owns it. Now, whether to conceal, or blaze th' affront? One way, I spread my infamy abroad; And, 'tother, hide a burning coal within, That preys upon my vitals: I can fix On nothing, but on vengeance.

Enter to him Sofia, Polidas, Gripus, and Tranio.

Grip. Yonder he is; walking hastily to and fro, before his door; like a citizen, clapping his sides before his shop, in a frosty morning: 'tis to catch a stomach, I believe.

Sof. I begin to be afraid, that he has more stomach to my sides and shoulders, than to his own victuals. How he shakes his head! and stamps! and what strides he fetches! He's in one of his damn'd moods again: I don't like the looks of him.

Amph. Oh, my mannerly, fair spoken, obedient slave, are you there! I can reach you now, without climbing: Now we shall try who's drunk, and who's sober.

Sof. Why this is as it should be: I was somewhat suspicious that you were in a pestilent humour. Yes, we will have a crash at the bottle, when your lordship pleases: I have summon'd 'em, you see: and they are notable toppers, especially Judge Gripus.

Grip.

Grip. Yes, faith; I never refuse my glass, in a good quarrel.

Amph. [*To Sof.*] Why, thou insolent villain; I'll teach a slave how to use his master thus.

Sof. Here's a fine business towards! I am sure I ran as fast as ever my legs could carry me, to call 'em: nay, you may trust my diligence, in all affairs belonging to the belly.

Grip. He has been very faithful to his commission, I'll bear him witness.

Amph. How can you be witness where you were not present? the balcony! sirrah, the balcony!

Sof. Why, to my best remembrance, you never invited the balcony.

Amph. What nonsense dost thou plead for an excuse of thy foul language, and thy base replies!

Sof. You fright a man out of his senses, first; and blame him afterwards, for talking nonsense:—but 'tis better for me to talk nonsense, than for some to do nonsense: I will say that, whatever comes on't. Pray, sir, let all things be done decently: what, I hope, when a man is to be hang'd, he is not truss'd up on the gallows like a dumb dog, without telling him wherefore.

Amph. By your pardon, gentlemen; I have no longer patience to forbear him.

Sof. Justice, justice! my Lord Gripus; as you are a true magistrate, protect me. Here's a process of beating going forward, without sentence given.

Grip. My Lord Amphitryon, this must not be: let me first understand the demerits of the criminal.

Sof. Hold you to that point, I beseech your honour; as you commiserate the case of a poor, innocent malefactor.

Amph. To shut the door against me, in my very face! to deny me entrance! to brave me from the balcony! to laugh at me, to threaten me! what proofs of innocence call you these? But if I punish not this insolence—[*Is going to beat him, and is held by Polidas and Tranio.*—] I beg you let me go——

Sof. I charge you in the King's name, hold him fast; for you see he's bloodily dispos'd.

Grip. Now, what hast thou to say for thyself, Sofia?

Sof. I say, in the first place,—be sure you hold him, gentlemen; for I shall never plead worth one farthing, while I am bodily afraid.

Pol. Speak boldly; I warrant thee.

Sof. Then if I may speak boldly, under my lord's favour,—I do not say he lies neither: no, I am too well bred for that; but his lordship fibbs most abominably.

Amph. Do you hear his impudence? yet will you let me go?

Sof. No impudence at all, my lord: for how cou'd I,—naturally speaking, be in the balcony and affronting you; when at the same time I was in every street of Thebes, inviting these gentlemen to dinner?

Grip. Hold a little: how long since was it that he spoke to you, from the said balcony?

Amph. Just now; not a minute before he brought you hither.

Sof. Now speak, my witnesses.

Grip. I can answer for him, for this last half hour.

Pol. And I.

Tran. And I.

Sof. Now judge equitably, gentlemen; whether I was not a civil well-bred person, to tell my lord he fibbs only?

Amph. Who gave that order, to invite 'em?

Sof. He that best might; yourself. By the same token, you bid old Bromia provide and 'twere for a Jupiter; and I put in for a brace, or a leash; no, now I think on't, it was for ten couple of Jupiters, to make sure of plenty.

Amph. When did I give thee this pretended commission?

Sof. Why, you gave me this pretended commission just after you had given Phædra a purse of gold to bring you and my lady together, that you might try to make up matters with her after your quarrel.

Amph. Where, in what place, did I give this order?

Sof. Here, in this place, in the presence of this
very

very door, and of that balcony: and if they cou'd speak, they wou'd both justify it.

Amph. O Heaven! these accidents are so surprising, the more I think of 'em, the more I am lost in my imagination.

Grip. Nay, he has told us some passages, as he came along, that seem to surpass the power of nature.

Sof. What think you now, my lord, of a certain twin brother of mine, call'd *Sofia*? 'tis a fly youth: pray Heaven you have not just such another relation, within doors, call'd *Amphitryon*. It may be it was he that put upon me, in your likeness: and perhaps he may have put something upon your lordship too, that may weigh heavy upon the forehead.

Amph. [*To those who hold him.*] Let me go——
Sofia may be innocent, and I will not hurt him:——
Open the door, I'll resolve my doubts immediately.

Sof. The door is peremptory, that it will not be open'd without keys: and my brother, on the inside, is in possession; and will not part with 'em.

Amph. Then 'tis manifest that I am affronted; break open the door there.

Grip. Stir not a man of you to his assistance.

Amph. Dost thou take part with my adultress too, because she is thy niece?

Grip. I take part with nothing but the law; and, to break the doors open, is to break the law.

Amph. Do thou command 'em then.

Grip. I command nothing without my warrant; and my clerk is not here to take his fees for drawing it.

Amph. [*Aside.*] The devil take all justice-brokers:—I curse him too when I have been hunting him all over the town, to be my witness!——But I'll bring soldiers to force open the doors by my own commission.

[*Exit Amphitryon.*]

Sof. Pox o' these forms of law, to defeat a man of a dinner, when he's sharp set! 'tis against the privilege of a freeborn stomach; and is no less than subversion of fundamentals.

[*Jupiter above in the balcony.*]

Jup. O, my friends, I am sorry I have made you wait so long: you are welcome; and the door shall be open'd to you immediately. [*Exit Jupiter.*]

Grip. Was not that Amphitryon?

Sof. Why, who shou'd it be else?

Grip. In all appearance it was he: but how got he thither?

Pol. In such a trice too!

Tran. And after he had just left us!

Grip. And so much alter'd, for the better, in his humour?

Sof. Here's such a company of foolish questions, when a man's hungry: you had best stay dinner till he has prov'd himself to be Amphitryon in form of law. But I'll make short work of that business: for I'll take mine oath 'tis he.

Grip. I should be glad it were.

Sof. How, glad it were! with your damn'd interrogatories—when you ought to be thankful, that so it is.

Grip. [*Aside.*] That I may see my mistress Phædra, and present her with my great gold goblet.

Sof. If this be not the true Amphitryon, I wish I may be kept without doors, fasting, and biting my own fingers for want of victuals; and that's a dreadful imprecation! I am for the inviting, and eating, and treating Amphitryon; I am sure 'tis he that is my lawfully begotten lord: and if you had an ounce of true justice in you, you ought to have laid hold on t'other Amphitryon, and committed him for a rogue, and an impostor, and a vagabond.

[*The door is opened: Mercury from within.*]

Merc. Enter quickly, masters: the passage on the right-hand leads to the gallery, where my lord expects you——For I am call'd another way.

[*Gripus, Tranio, and Polidas go into the house.*]

Sof. I should know that voice, by a secret instinct:
'Tis a tongue of my family; and belongs to my brother Sofia—It must be so; for it carries a cudgelling kind of sound in it——But, put the worst—let me weigh this matter wisely—Here's a beating and a belly-

‘belly-full, against no beating and no belly-full.
 ‘The beating is bad; but the dinner is good;
 ‘Now, not to be beaten, is but negatively good;
 ‘but, not to fill my belly, is positively bad—Upon
 ‘the whole matter, my final resolution is, to take
 ‘the good and the bad as they come together.’

Is entering: Mercury meets him at the door.

Merc. Whither now, you kitchen-scum? From whence this impudence, to enter here without permission?

Sof. Most illustrious sir! my ticket is my hunger. Shew the full bowels of your compassion, to the empty bowels of my famine.

Merc. Were you not charg’d to return no more? I’ll cut you into quarters, and hang you upon the shambles.

Sof. You’ll get but little credit by me: alas, sir, I am but mere carrion! Brave Sofia, compassionate coward Sofia; and beat not thyself, in beating me.

Merc. Who gave you that privilege, sirrah, to assume my name? Have you not been sufficiently warn’d of it; and receiv’d part of punishment already?

Sof. May it please you, sir, the name is big enough for both of us. I would have obey’d you, and quitted my title to it; but, wherever I come, the malicious world will call me Sofia, in spite of me. I am sensible there are two Amphitryons; and why may not there be two Sofia’s? Let those two cut one another’s throats at their own pleasure; but you and I will be wiser, by my consent, and hold good intelligence together.

Merc. No, no: two Sofia’s would make but two fools.

Sof. Then let me be the fool, and be you the prudent person; and choose for yourself some wiser name; or you shall be the eldest brother; and I’ll be content to be the younger, tho’ I lose my inheritance.

Merc. I tell thee, I am the only son of our family.

Sof. Ah! then let me be your bastard brother, and the son of a whore—I hope that’s but reasonable.

Merc. No, thou shalt not disgrace my father; for there are few bastards now-a-days worth owning.

Sof. Ah! poor Sofia! What will become of thee?

Merc. Yet again profanely using my proper name?

Sof. I did not mean myself—I was thinking of another Sofia, a poor fellow, that was once of my acquaintance, unfortunately banish'd out of doors, when dinner was just coming upon the table.

Enter Phædra.

Phæd. Sofia, you and I must—Bless me! what have we here—a couple of you! or do I see double?

Sof. I would fain bring it about, that I might make one of 'em: but he's unreasonable, and will needs incorporate me, and swallow me whole into himself. If he would be content to be but one and a half, 'twould never grieve me.

Merc. 'Tis a perverse rascal! I kick him and cudgel him to no purpose; for still he's obstinate to stick to me: and I can never beat him out of my resemblance.

Phæd. Which of you two is Sofia? for t'other must be the devil.

Sof. You had best ask him, that has play'd the devil with my back and sides.

Merc. You had best ask him, who gave you the gold goblet.

Phæd. No, that's already given: but he shall be my Sofia that will give me such another.

Merc. I find you have been interloping, sirrah.

Sof. No, indeed, sir! I only promis'd her a gold thimble; which was as much as comes to my proportion of being Sofia.

Phæd. This is no Sofia for my money: beat him away, t'other Sofia; he grows insufferable.

Sof. [*Aside.*] Wou'd I were valiant, that I might beat him away: and succeed him at the dinner, for a pragmatistical son of a whore, as he is—

Merc. What's that you are muttering betwixt your teeth, of a son of a whore, sirrah?

Sof. I am sure I meant you no offence; for, if I am not Sofia, I am the son of a whore, for ought I know: and,

and, if you are Sofia, you may be the son of a whore, for ought you know.

Merc. Whatever I am, I will be Sofia, as long as I please: and whenever you visit me, you shall be sure of the civility of the cudgel.

Sof. If you will promise to beat me into the house, you may begin when you please with me: but to be beaten out of the house, at dinner-time, flesh and blood can never bear it.

[Mercury beats him about: and Sofia is still making towards the door: but Mercury gets betwixt; and at length drives him off the stage.]

Phæd. In the name of wonder, what are you that are Sofia, and are not Sofia?

Merc. If thou wouldst know more of me, my person is freely at thy disposing.

Phæd. Then I dispose of it to you again; for 'tis so ugly, 'tis not for my use.

Merc. I can be ugly or handsome as I please; go to bed old, and rise young. I have so many suits of persons by me, I can shift 'em when I will.

Phæd. You are a fool then, to put on your worst clothes, when you come a wooing.

Merc. Go to; ask no more questions. I am for thy turn; for I know thy heart, and see all thou hast about thee. In thy right pocket—let me see—three love-letters from Judge Gripus, written to the bottom, on three sides; full of fustian passion, and hearty nonsense: as also in the same pocket, a letter of thine intended to him; consisting of nine lines and a half, scrawl'd and false spell'd, to shew thou art a woman.

Phæd. Is the devil in you, to see all this? Now, for Heaven's sake, do not look in t'other pocket—

Merc. Nay, there's nothing there, but a bawdy lampoon, and—

Phæd. *[Giving a great frisk.]* Look no farther, I beseech you—

Merc. And a silver spoon—

Phæd. *[Shrieking.]* Ah!

Merc. Which you purloin'd last night from Bromia.

Phad. Keep my counsel, or I am undone for ever.

[Holding up her hands to him]

Merc. No: I'll mortify thee, now I have an handle to thy iniquity, if thou wilt not love me—

Phad. Well, if you'll promise me to be secret, I will love you: because indeed I dare do no other.

Merc. 'Tis a good girl—I will be secret; and further, I will be assisting to thee in thy filching: for thou and I were born under the same planet.

Phad. And we shall come to the same end too, I'm afraid.

Merc. No, no; since thou hast wit enough already to cozen a judge, thou needst never fear hanging.

Phad. And will you make yourself a younger man, and be handsome too, and rich? for you that know hearts, must needs know, that I shall never be constant to such an ugly old Sofia.

Merc. As to my youth and beauty, you shall know more of that another time. But, prithee, why art thou so covetous of riches?

Phad. Why, because riches will procure every thing else that I can wish for.

Merc. But what if every thing else could be procur'd without riches: would not that do as well?

Phad. Why no; there's a pleasure, methinks, in having the money before one lays it out.

Merc. And yet, 'till it is laid out, it is as useless as so much dirt.

Phad. Aye—that may be—but when my heart dances to the chinking of money, it is not at leisure to think of that.

Merc. But suppose, that, without money, you could procure all that money could buy and more.

Phad. Why, as well as I love money, I have no objection to any good thing that money won't buy: but pray how is it to be had?

Merc. To be had? why, upon the easiest terms in the world; only by a motion of the finger, or a stamp with the foot.

Phad. Phoo, that's impossible.

Merc. You shall make the experiment.

Phad.

Phæd. Shall I? so I will then, this minute. Must I stamp with my foot, or beckon with my finger?

Merc. First try to find out what you wish for, which I have known a difficult task for a woman.

Phæd. Let me see——

Merc. Come, I'll help you—If you had been put into possession of Gripus's wealth yesterday, what would you have had to entertain you to-day?

Phæd. Why, I wou'd have had——let me see—— I wou'd have had, just now, a band of the best music in Thebes, and a song in the character of Plutus in praise of money.

Merc. Well, now stamp with your foot.

[*Phædra stamps; the music strikes up; she starts and screams out.*]

Merc. Nay, nay, don't spoil the music—there's a friend of mine in the character of Plutus just coming in.

Phæd. I am very much oblig'd to you and your friend; but, if you please, I had rather keep a little farther out of his reach.

Merc. Pshaw, pshaw, stay where you are; my friends hurt nobody without my leave.

Enter Plutus, who sings the following song.

Away with the fables philosophers hold,
Of pleasure that honesty gains without gold:
To be rich is the blessings of life to secure;
And the man must be certainly wretched that's poor.

The virtue that claims all the Gods for its friends,
On Gold, mighty Gold, for existence depends:
What wrongs, without Gold, can a mortal redress?
Or who, without Gold, can get blessings, or bless?

The Weak can you succour, the Worthy reward,
If Money be wanting, the gift and the guard?
In Gold there is strength which no foe can withstand;
It conquers and triumphs, by sea and by land.

In Gold there are *charms*; for youth and the fair,
 Sigh one for an heiress, and one for an heir.
 There's *sense*; for each circle that listens demure,
 Consents with a grin, and cries "Yes to be sure!"
 To be rich, if you trust your own ears and your eyes,
 Is at once to be *strong*, to be *fair*, to be *wise*.

Phæd. There's for you now—what have you to say to that?

Merc. Why, Wit shall reply for me; and, to mortify you the more, it shall be in the character of a woman.

Phæd. [*To Plutus, who is going.*] Stay then, Mr. Plutus, if you please——let's hear what he'll say by way of reply.

Merc. That's but an ill-natur'd experiment; for Wit and Wealth have no kindness for one another: however, it shall be as you please for once.

[*Mercury waves his caduceus; a nymph enters in the character of Wit.*]

S O N G.

Plutus, vain is all your vaunting,
 Wit must life with blifs supply.
 Gold, alas! should Wit be wanting,
 Wou'd not find a joy to buy.

Wit alone creates the blessing,
 Which, exchang'd for Gold, you share:
 Steril Gold alone possessing,
 What has Man but gloom and care?

Wit, of ev'ry art deviser,
 Ev'ry passion can controll:
 Can to Pity move the miser,
 Can with mirth dilate his soul.

Gold itself, on Wit depending,
 Thence derives its utmost pow'r:
 Folly all profusely spending,
 Folly hoarding all is poor.

Phæd. To her, Mr. Plutus.

D U E T.

Plut. In vain wou'd your jargon our senses bewitch,
D'ye tell me that Gold will not make a man rich?

Wit. It is Wit, Wit alone, that can keep it or use;
And it cannot enrich those that hide it or lose.

Plut. Your quibbles I scorn.

Wit. But you cannot reply.

Plut. I boldly affirm——

Wit. What I boldly deny.

Plut. I'll bet you ten millions.

Wit. No wagers I lay.

Plut. You dare not.

Wit. I scorn you.

Plut. I hate you.

Wit. Away.

Plut. I go—may great Jove in his mercy decree,
That we never may meet, since we ne'er can agree.

Wit. Go you to the Foolish.

Plut. And you to the Poor.

Wit. The Poor I can bless, and their blessings secure.
[*Exeunt severally.*]

Phæd. Well, for all these fine promises of Wit, I
have no great opinion of the happiness of poverty.

Merc. If you will not yield to argument, let
Experiment convince you.

[*Strikes the scene with his caduceus, and it changes to
a rural prospect, with a dance of peasants to country music.*]

Merc. Well, what think you, Phædra—are these
people happy?

Phæd. If they are happy, they owe their happiness
as little to Wit as to Money, I believe.

Merc. I beg your pardon—if it had not been for
the arts that Wit has invented, they would have had
neither pipe nor dance: and mere ease and content
are but negative happiness at the best.

Phæd. Well, I find 'tis in vain to dispute with
you; but I shall hold my opinion for all that. Adieu—
if you make me happy according to my way of
thinking, perhaps I may make you happy according
to yours.

[*Exit.*]

Merc.

Merc. Woman—mere woman!—however, I love thee but as mere woman, and only as mere woman thou art mine.

Such bargain-loves as I with Phædra treat,
Are all the leagues and friendship of the great.

Our Iron Age is grown an age of gold:

'Tis who bids most—for all men wou'd be sold,

[*Exit.*]

A C T V.

Enter Gripus and Phædra. Gripus *has the goblet in his hand.*

Phæd. **Y**OU will not be so base to take it from me?
Grip. 'Tis my proper chattel: and I'll seize my own, in whatever hands I find it.

Phæd. You know I only shew'd it you to provoke your generosity, that you might out-bid your rival with a better present.

Grip. My rival is a thief: and I'll indict you for a receiver of stol'n goods.

Phæd. Thou hide-bound lover!

Grip. Thou very mercenary mistress!

Phæd. Thou most mercenary magistrate!

Grip. Thou seller of thyself!

Phæd. Thou seller of other people! Thou weather-cock of government: that when the wind blows for the subject, point'st to privilege; and when it changes for the sovereign, veer'st to prerogative.

Grip. Will you compound, and take it as my present?

Phæd. No: but I'll send thy rival to force it from thee. [*Exit Phædra.*]

Grip. When a thief is hangman to his judge, the hangman will soon decide the difference.

Enter Mercury, with two swords.

Merc. [*Bowing.*] Save your good lordship.

Grip.

Grip. From an impertinent coxcomb—I am out of humour, and am in haste—Leave me.

Merc. 'Tis my duty to attend on your lordship, and to ease you of that indecent burden.

Grip. Gold was never any burden to one of my profession.

Merc. By your lordship's permission, Phædra has sent me to take it from you.

Grip. What, by violence?

Merc. [*Still bowing.*] No; but by your honour's permission, I am to restore it to her, and persuade your lordship to renounce your pretensions to her.

Grip. Tell her flatly, I will neither do one nor t'other.

Merc. O my good lord, I dare pass my word for your free consent to both.—Will your honour be pleas'd to take your choice of one of these?

Grip. Why these are swords: what have I to do with them?

Merc. Only to take your choice of one of them——which your lordship pleases; and leave the other to your most obedient servant.

Grip. What, one of these ungodly weapons? Take notice, I'll lay you by the heels, sirrah: this has the appearance of an unlawful bloody challenge.

Merc. You magistrates are pleas'd to call it so, my lord; but with us sword-men, 'tis an honourable invitation to the cutting of one another's throats.

Grip. Be answer'd; I have no throat to cut. The law shall decide our controversy.

Merc. By your permission, my lord, it must be dispatch'd this way.

Grip. I'll see thee hang'd before I give thee any such permission, to dispatch me into another world.

Merc. At the least, my lord, you have no occasion to complain of my want of respect to you: you will neither restore the goblet, nor renounce Phædra: I offer you the combat; you refuse it; all this is done in the forms of honour: It follows, that I am to affront, cudgel you, or kick you, at my own arbitrement;

ment; and I suppose, you are too honourable not to approve of my proceeding.

Grip. Here's a new sort of process, that was never heard of in any of our courts.

Merc. This, my good lord, is law in short-hand; without your long preambles, and tedious repetitions, that signify nothing but to squeeze the subject: therefore, with your lordship's favour, I begin.

[Fillips him under the chin.]

Grip. What's this for?

Merc. To give you an occasion of returning me a box o' th' ear; that so, all things may proceed methodically.

Grip. I put in no answer, but suffer a non-suit.

Merc. No, my lord; for the costs and charges are to be paid: will you please to restore the cup?

Grip. I have told thee, no.

Merc. Then from your chin, I must ascend to your lordship's ears.

[Pulls his ears.]

Grip. Oh, oh, oh, oh.—Wilt thou never leave lugging me by the ears?

Merc. Not till your lordship will be pleas'd to hear reason.

[Pulling again.]

Grip. Take the cup, and the devil give thee joy on't.

Merc. *[Still holding him.]* And your lordship will farther be graciously pleased to release all claims, titles, and actions whatsoever to Phædra: you must give me leave to add one small memento, for that too.

[Pulling him again.]

Grip. I renounce her, I release her.

Enter Phædra.

Merc. *[To her.]* Phædra, my lord has been pleas'd to be very gracious, without pushing matters to extremity.

Phad. I overheard it all. But give me livery and seisin of the goblet, in the first place.

Merc. There's an act of oblivion should be pass'd too.

Phad. Let him begin to remember quarrels when

he dare; now I have him under my girdle, I'll cap
verses with him to the end of the chapter.

Enter Amphitryon and guards.

Amph. [To *Gripus*.] At last I have got possession
without your lordship's warrant: *Phædra*, tell *Alc-*
mena I am here.

Phæd. I'll carry no such lying message—You are
not here, and you cannot be here; for, to my know-
ledge, you are above with my lady, in the chamber.

Amph. All of a piece, and all witchcraft! Answer
me precisely; dost thou not know me for *Amphitryon*?

Phæd. Answer me first: did you give me a dia-
mond, and a purse of gold?

Amph. Thou know'st I did not.

Phæd. Then, by the same token, I know you are
not the true *Amphitryon*.

Amph. I'll undo this enchantment with my sword,
and kill the sorcerer: come up, gentlemen, and fol-
low me.

[To the guards.]

Phæd. I'll save you the labour, and call him down
to confront you, if you dare attend him.

[Exit *Phædra*.]

Merc. [Aside.] Now the spell is ended, and *Jupi-*
ter can enchant no more; or else *Amphitryon* had
not enter'd so easily.—[*Gripus* is stealing off.]
Whither now, *Gripus*? I have business for you. If
you offer to stir, you know what follows.

Enter Jupiter, follow'd by Tranio and Polidas.

Jup. Who dares to play the master in my house?
What noise is this that calls me from above,
Invades my soft recess,
And, like a tide, breaks in upon my love?

Amph. O Heav'ns, what's this I see?

Tran. What a prodigy!

Pol. How! Two *Amphitryons*!

Grip. I have beheld th' appearance of two suns,
But still the false was dimmer than the true;
Here, both shine out alike.

Amph. This is a sight, that, like the Gorgon's head,
Chills all my blood, and stiffens me to stone.
I need no more inquire into my fate;
For what I see resolves my doubts too plain.

Tran.

Tran. Two drops of water cannot be more like.

Pol. They are two very fames.

Merc. [*Aside.*] Our Jupiter is a great comedian, he counterfeits most admirably.

Amph. Now I am gather'd back into myself;
My heart beats high, and pushes out the blood,

[*Drawing his sword.*]

To give me just revenge on this impostor.

If you are brave, assist me [*To the guards.*].—Not one
stirs!

What, are all brib'd to take th' enchanter's part?—

'Tis true, the work is mine; and thus——

[*Going to rush upon Jupiter; and is held by Tranio and Polidas.*]

Pol. It must not be.

Jup. Give him his way; I dare the madman's worst,
But still take notice that it looks not like

The true Amphitryon, to fly out at first

To brutal force: it shews he doubts his cause,

Who dares not trust his reason to defend it.

Amph. [*Struggling.*] Thou base usurper of my
name and bed!

No less than thy heart's blood can wash away

Th' affronts I have sustain'd.

Tran. We must not suffer

So strange a duel, as Amphitryon

To fight against himself.

Pol. Nor think we wrong you, when we hold your

We know our duty to our general; [hands:]

We know the ties of friendship to our friend;

But who that friend, or who that gen'ral is,

Without more certain proofs betwixt you two,

Is hard to be distinguish'd by our reason,

Impossible by sight.

Amph. I know it; and have satisfy'd myself,

I am the true Amphitryon.

Jup. See again,

He shuns the certain proofs; and dares not stand

Impartial judgment, and award of right.

But since Alcmena's honour is concern'd,

Whom, more than life and all the world, I love;

This

This I propose, as equal to us both.
 Tranio and Polidas, be you assistants;
 The guards be ready to secure th' impostor,
 When once so prov'd, for public punishment;
 And Gripus, be thou umpire of the cause.

Amph. I am content; let him proceed to examination.

Grip. [*Aside to Merc.*] On whose side wou'd you please that I shou'd give the sentence?

Merc. [*Aside to him.*] Follow thy conscience for once: but not to make a custom of it neither; nor to leave an evil precedent of uprightness to future judges—— [*Aside.*] 'Tis a good thing to have a magistrate under correction: your old fornicating judge dares never give sentence against him that knows 'his haunts.'

Pol. Your lordship knows I was master of Amphitryon's ship; and I desire to know of him, what pass'd in private betwixt us two at his landing, when he was just ready to engage the enemy?

Grip. Let the true Amphitryon answer first ——

Jup. and Amph. together.—My lord, I told him——

Grip. Peace both of you!—'Tis a plain case they are both true; for they both speak together: but for more certainty, let the false Amphitryon speak first.

Merc. Now they are both silent——

Grip. Then 'tis as plain on t'other side, that they are both false Amphitryons.

Merc. Which Amphitryon shall speak first?

Grip. Let the cholerick Amphitryon speak: and let the peaceable hold his peace.

Amph. [*To Pol.*] You may remember that I whisper'd you, not to part from the stern, one single moment.

Pol. You did so.

Grip. No more words then: I proceed to sentence.

Jup. 'Twas I that whisper'd him; and he may remember I gave him this reason for it, that if our men were beaten, I might secure my own retreat.

Pol. You did so.

Grip. Now again he's as true as t'other.

Tran.

Tran. You know I was pay-master : what directions did you give me the night before the battle?

Grip. To which of the You's art thou speaking?

Amph. I order'd you to take particular care of the great bag.

Grip. Why this is demonstration.

Jup. The bag that I recommended to you was of tyger's skin ; and mark'd Beta.

Grip. In sadness I think they are both jugglers : here's nothing, and here's nothing ; and then *hiccius doccius*, and they are both here again.

Tran. You, peaceable Amphitryon, what money was there in that bag?

Jup. The sum, in gross, amounted just to fifty Attic talents.

Tran. To a farthing.

Grip. Paugh ! Obvious, obvious.

Amph. Two thousand pieces of gold were ty'd up in a handkerchief by themselves.

Tran. I remember it.

Grip. Then 'tis dubious again.

Jup. But the rest was not all silver ; for there were just four thousand brass halfpence.

Grip. Being but brass, the proof is inconsiderable : if they had been silver, it had gone on your side.

Amph. [*To Jup.*] Death and Hell, you will not persuade me that I did not kill Pterelas?

Jup. Nor you me that I did not enjoy Alcmena?

Amph. That last was poison to me—— [*Aside.* Yet there's one proof thou canst not counterfeit : In killing Pterelas, I had a wound Full in the brawny part of my right arm ; Where still the scar remains : now blush, impostor, For this thou canst not shew.

[*Bares his arm, and shews the scar, which they all look on.*]

Omnes. This is the true Amphitryon.

Jup. May your lordship please——

Grip. No, sirrah, it does not please me : hold your tongue, for the case is manifest.

Jup. By your favour then, this shall speak for me.

[*Bares his arm, and shews it.*]

Tran.

Tran. 'Tis just in the same muscle.

Pol. Of the same length and breadth; and the scar of the same bluish colour.

Grip. [*To Jup.*] Did not I charge you not to speak? 'Twas plain enough before: and now you have puzzled it again.

Amph. Good Gods, how can this be!

Grip. For certain there was but one Pterelas; and he must have been in the plot against himself too: for he was kill'd first by one of them; and then rose again out of respect to t'other Amphitryon, to be kill'd twice over.

Enter Alcmena, Phædra, and Bromia.

Alc. [*Turning to Phæd. and Bromia.*] No more of this; it sounds impossible, That two shou'd be so like, no difference found.

Phad. You'll find it true.

Alc. Then where's Alcmena's honour and her fame?—

Farewell my needless fear, it cannot be:
This is a case too nice for vulgar sight—
But let me come, my heart will guide my eyes
To point, and tremble to its proper choice.

[*Seeing Amphitryon, goes to him.*

There neither was, nor is, but one Amphitryon;
And I am only his — [*Goes to take him by the hand.*

Amph. [*Pushing her away from him.*] Away, adulteress!

Jup. My gentle love, my treasure, and my joy,
Follow no more that false and foolish fire,
'That wou'd mislead thy fame to sure destruction!
Look on thy better husband, and thy friend,
Who will not leave thee liable to scorn,
But vindicate thy honour from that wretch,
Who wou'd by base aspersions blot thy virtue.

Alc. [*Going to him, who embraces her.*]

I was indeed mistaken; thou art he!
'Thy words, thy thoughts, thy soul is all Amphitryon.
Th' impostor has thy features, not thy mind;
The face might have deceiv'd me in my choice,
'Thy kindness is a guide that cannot err.

Amph.

Amph. What, in my presence to prefer the villain?
 O execrable cheat! I break the truce;
 And will no more attend your vain decisions.
 To this—and to the Gods I'll trust my cause.

[*Is rushing upon Jupiter, and is held again.*
Jup. Poor man; how I contemn those idle threats!
 Were I dispos'd, thou might'st as safely meet
 The thunder launch'd from the red arm of Jove.
 But in the face of Thebes, she shall be clear'd;
 And what I am, and what thou art, be known.
 Attend, and I will bring convincing proofs.

Amph. Thou would'st elude my justice, and escape:
 But I will follow thee thro' earth, and seas;
 Nor hell shall hide thee from my just revenge.

Jup. I'll spare thy pains: it shall be quickly seen,
 Betwixt us two, who seeks, and who avoids—
 Come in, my friends—and thou who seem'st *Am-*
phitryon;

That all who are in doubt, may know the true.
 [*Jupiter re-enters the house; with him Amphitryon,*
Alcmena, Polidas, Tranio, and guards.

Merc. Thou, Gripus, and you, Bromia, stay with
 Phædra:

[*To Grip. and Brom. who are following,*
 Let their affairs alone, and mind we ours.
 Amphitryon's rival shall appear a God:
 But know before-hand, I am Mercury;
 Who want not heav'n, while Phædra is on earth.

Brom. But, an't please your lordship, is my fellow-servant, Phædra, to be exalted into the heav'ns, and made a star?

Phad. When that comes to pass, if you look up a-nights, I shall remember old kindnesses, and vouchsafe to twinkle on you.

Enter Sofia, peeping about him, and seeing Mercury, is starting back.

Sof. Here he is again; and there's no passing by him into the house, unless I were a spright, to glide in thro' the key-hole.—I am to be a vagabond, I find.

Merc. Sofia, come back.

Sof.

Sof. No, I thank you—you may whistle me long enough; a beaten dog has always the wit to avoid his master.

Merc. I permit thee to be Sofia again.

Sof. 'Tis an unfortunate name, and I abandon it: he that has an itch to be beaten, let him take it up for Sofia;—what have I said now! I mean for me; for I neither am, nor will be Sofia.

Merc. But thou may'st be so in safety: for I have acknowledg'd myself to be God Mercury.

Sof. I am your most humble servant, good Mr. Mercury. But how shall I be sure that you will never assume my shape again?

Merc. Because I am weary of wearing so villainous an outside.

Sof. Well, well; as villainous as it is, here's old Bromia will be contented with it.

Brom. Yes, now I am sure that I may chastise you safely.

Sof. Ay, but you had best take heed how you attempt it; for as Mercury has turn'd himself into me, so I may take the toy into my head, to turn myself into Mercury, that I may swinge you off condignly.

Merc. In the mean time be all my witnesses, that I take Phædra for my wife of the left-hand; that is, in the nature of a lawful concubine.

Phæd. You shall pardon me for believing you, for all you are a God: for you have a terrible ill name below; and I'm afraid you'll get a footman, instead of a priest, to marry us.

Merc. But here's Gripus shall draw up articles betwixt us.

Phæd. But he's terribly us'd to false conveyancing—Well, be it so; for my counsel shall o'erlook 'em before I sign. Come on, Gripus; that I may have him under black and white.

[Here Gripus gets ready pen, ink, and paper.]

Merc. With all my heart.

Phæd. [to Grip.] Begin, begin. Heads of articles to be made, &c. betwixt Mercury, God of Thieves—

Merc. And Phædra, Queen of Gypsies—*Imprimis,*

mis. I promise to buy and settle upon her an estate, containing nine thousand acres of land, in any part of Boeotia, to her own liking.

Phad. Provided always, that no part of the said nine thousand acres, shall be upon, or adjoining to Mount Parnassus; for I will not be fobb'd off with a poetical estate.

Merc. Memorandum, That she be always constant to me; and admit of no other lover.

Phad. Memorandum, Unless it be a lover that offers more; and that the constancy shall not exceed the settlement.

Merc. Item, That she shall keep no male servants in her house.

Brom. Here's no provision made for children yet.

Phad. Well remember'd, Bromia; I bargain that my eldest son shall be a hero, and my eldest daughter a king's mistress.

Merc. That is to say, a blockhead and a harlot, Phædra.

Phad. That's true; but who dares call 'em so? Then for the younger children:—but now I think on't, we'll have no more, but master and miss; for the rest wou'd be but chargeable, and a burden to the nation.

Merc. Yes, yes; the second shall be a false prophet: he shall have wit enough to set up a new religion; and too much wit to die a martyr for it.

Phad. O what had I forgot? there's pin-money, and alimony, and separate maintenance, and a thousand things more to be consider'd: that are all to be tack'd to this act of settlement.

Ses. I am a fool, I must confess—but yet I can see as far into a mill-stone as the best of you. I have observ'd, that you women-wits are commonly so quick upon the scent, that you often over-run it: now I wou'd ask of madam Phædra, that in case Mr. Mercury there shou'd be pleas'd to break these articles, in what court of judicature she intends to sue him?

Phad. The fool has hit upon't—Gods and great men

men are never to be sued ; for they can always plead privilege ; and therefore for once, Monsieur, I'll take your word ; for as long as you love me, you'll be sure to keep it ; and in the mean time I shall be gaining experience how to manage some rich cully ; for no woman ever made her fortune by a wit.

[*It thunders ; and the company within doors, Amphitryon, Alcmena, Polidas, and Tranio, all come running out, and join with the rest, who were on the Theatre before.*]

Amph. Sure 'tis some God ! he vanish'd from our sight,

And told us we should see him soon return.

Alc. I know not what to hope, nor what to fear,
A simple error is a real crime ;
And unconsenting innocence is lost.

[*A second peal of thunder ; after which Jupiter appears in a machine.*]

Jup. Look up, Amphitryon, and behold above,
Th' impostor God, the rival of thy love :
In thy own shape, see Jupiter appear,
And let that sight secure thy jealous fear.
Disgrace, and infamy, are turn'd to boast ;
No fame, in Jove's concurrence, can be lost :
What he enjoys, he justifies from vice ;
And by partaking stamps into a price.

Merc. [*Aside.*] Amphitryon and Alcmena both stand mute, and know not how to take it.

Sof. [*Aside.*] Our sovereign lord Jupiter is a fly Companion ; he knows how to gild a bitter pill.

Jup. From this auspicious night shall rise an heir,
Great like his sire, and like his mother fair :
Wrongs to redress, and tyrants to dispossess ;
Born for a world that wants a Hercules.
Monsters, and monster-men he shall engage,
And toil and struggle thro' an impious age.
Peace to his labours shall at length succeed ;
And murm'ring men, unwilling to be freed,
Shall be compell'd to happiness, by need.

[*Jupiter is carry'd back to heaven.*

Omnes.

Omnes. We all congratulate Amphitryon.

Sof. Ah, Bromia, Bromia; if thou hadst been as handsome and as young as Phædra! I say no more—but somebody might have made his fortunes as well as his master, and never the worse man neither.

But—down, Ambition! let me not complain—

Enough that I am Sofia once again!

Tho' not a cuckold, yet content I'll be;

The great man's happiness is not for me.

But of myself shall I be robb'd no more?—

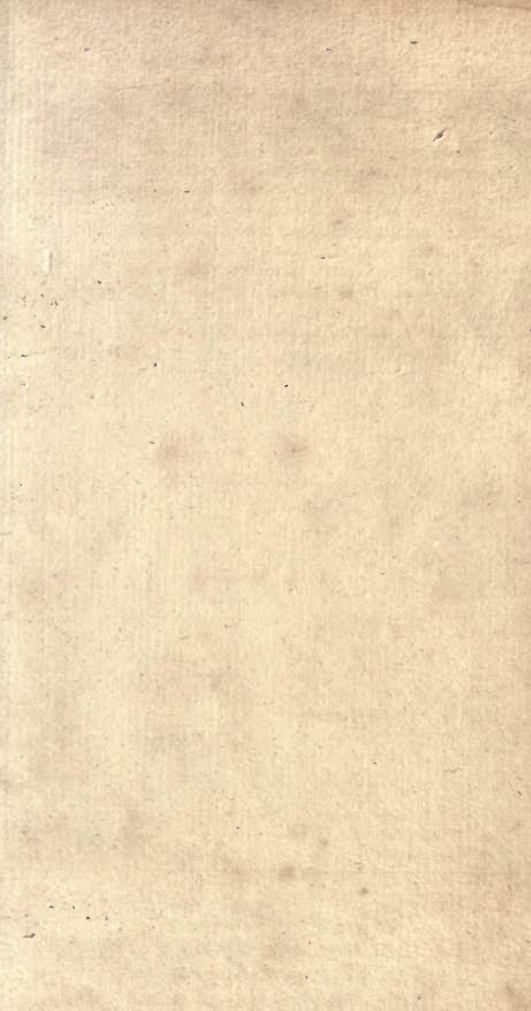
Your voice, “ye learned Thebans,” I implore—

Give me your suffrage, I'll be Sofia still;

Let bully Merc'ry there do what he will.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

F I N I S.



DOUBLE DEALER.



Dodd ad viv. del.

Walker sculp

MR. PALMER and MRS. GARDINER,
in the Character of
CARELESS and LADY PLYANT.

Car. Can you be so cruel

L. Ply. Arise I beseech you.

Act 4. Sc. 2.

Published, Apr. 5. 1777 by J. Lowndes & Partners.

THE
DOUBLE DEALER.

A
COMEDY.

By Mr. CONGREV E.

Marked with the Variations in the

MANAGER'S BOOK.

AT THE
Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden.



L O N D O N:

Printed for T. DAVIES; T. LOWNDES; T. CASLON;
W. NICOLL; and S. BLADON.

M. DCC. LXXVII.

✂ The Reader is desired to observe, that the passages omitted in the Representation at the Theatres are here preserved, and marked with inverted Commas ; as in Lines 13, 14, in Page 7.

P R O L O G U E.

MOOORS have this way (as story tells) to know
 Whether their brats are truly got, or no;
 Into the sea, the new-born babe is thrown,
 There as instinct directs, to swim, or drown.
 A barbarous device, to try if spouse
 Has kept religiously her nuptial vows.

Such are the trials, poets make of plays:
 Only they trust to more inconstant seas;
 So does our author, this his child commit
 To the tempestuous mercy of the pit,
 To know if it be truly born of wit.

Criticks avaunt; for you are fish of prey,
 And feed, like sharks, upon an infant play,
 Be ev'ry monster of the deep away;
 Let's have a fair trial, and a clear sea.

Let Nature work, and do not damn too soon,
 For life will struggle long, ere it sink down:
 And will at least rise thrice, before it drown.
 Let us consider, had it been our fate,
 Thus hardly to be prov'd legitimate!
 I will not say, we'd all in danger been,
 Were each to suffer for his mother's sin:
 But by my troth I cannot avoid thinking,
 How nearly some good men might have 'scap'd sinking.
 But, Heav'n be prais'd, this custom is confin'd
 Alone to th' offspring of the Muses kind:
 Our christian cuckolds are more bent to pity;
 I know not one Moor-husband in the city.
 P'th' good man's arms the chopping bastard thrives,
 For he thinks all his own that is his wife's.

Whatever fate is for this play design'd,
 The poet's sure he shall some comfort find:
 For if his Muse has play'd him false, the worst
 That can befall him, is, to be divorc'd;
 You husbands judge, if that, be to be curs'd.

Dramatis Personæ.

	M E N.	AT COVENT-GARDIN.
Maskwell, —	—	Mr. AICKIN.
Lord Touchwood, —	—	Mr. CLARKE.
Mellefont, —	—	Mr. WROUGHTON.
Careless, —	—	Mr. LEWIS.
Lord Froth, —	—	Mr. BOOTH.
Brisk, —	—	Mr. LEE LEWIS.
Sir Paul Plyant, —	—	Mr. MACKLIN.

	W O M E N.	
Lady Touchwood, —	—	Miss JACKSON.
Cynthia, —	—	Miss LEESON.
Lady Froth, —	—	Mrs. MATTOCKS.
Lady Plyant, —	—	Miss MACKLIN.

Chaplain, Boy, Footmen, and Attendants.

The SCENE, a Gallery in Lord Touchwood's House, with Chambers adjoining.

T H E
D O U B L E D E A L E R.

A C T. I.

Enter Careless, crossing the stage, with his hat, gloves, and sword in his hands; as just risen from table: Meldefont following him.

Mel. **N**ED, Ned, whither so fast? What, turn'd flincher! Why, you wo'not leave us?

Care. Where are the women? I'm weary of drinking, and begin to think them the better company.

Mel. Then thy reason staggers, and thou'rt almost tipsey.

Care. No, faith, but your fools grow noisy——and if a man must endure the noise of words without sense, I think the women have more musical voices and become nonsense better.

Mel. Why, they are at the end of the gallery; retir'd to their tea, and scandal; according to their ancient custom, after dinner.——But I made a pretence to follow you, because I had something to say to you in private, and I am not like to have many opportunities this evening.

Care. And here's this coxcomb most critically come to interrupt you.

Enter Brisk.

Brisk. Boys, boys, lads, where are you? What do you give ground, mortgage for a bottle, ha? *Careless*, this is your trick; you're always spoiling company by leaving it.

Care. And thou art always spoiling company by coming into't.

6 THE DOUBLE DEALER.

Brisk. Pooh, ha, ha, ha! I know you envy me. Spite, proud spite, by the gods! and burning envy—I'll be judg'd by *Mellefont* here, who gives and takes raillery better, you, or I. Pshaw, man, when I say you spoil company by leaving it, I mean you leave nobody for the company to laugh at. I think there I was with you, ha? *Mellefont.*

Mel. O' my word, *Brisk*, that was a home thrust, you have silenc'd him.

Brisk. O my dear *Mellefont*, let me perish, if thou art not the soul of conversation, the very essence of wit and spirit of wine. —The deuce take me if there were three good things said, or one understood, since thy amputation from the body of our society. —He, I think that's pretty and metaphorical enough: I'gad I could not have said it out of thy company, —*Careless*, ha?

Care. Hum, ay, what is't?

Brisk. O, *mon cœur!* What is't! Nay gad I'll punish for want of apprehension: the deuce take me if I tell you.

Mel. No, no, hang him, he has no taste. —But, dear *Brisk*, excuse me, I have a little business.

Care. Pr'ythee get thee gone; thou seest we are serious.

Mel. We'll come immediately, if you'll but go in, and keep up good humour and sense in the company: Pr'ythee do, they'll fall asleep else.

Brisk. I'gad so they will—Well I will, I will, gad you shall command me from the *Zenith* to the *Nadir*. —But the deuce take me if I say a good thing 'till you come. —But pr'ythee dear rogue, make haste, pr'ythee make haste, I shall burst else. —And yonder your uncle, my Lord *Touchwood*, swears he'll disinherit you, and Sir *Paul Plyant* threatens to disclaim you for a son-in-law, and my Lord *Froth* won't dance at your wedding to morrow; nor the deuce take me, I won't write your epithalamium—and see what a condition you're like to be brought to.

Mel. Well, I'll speak but three words, and follow you.

Brisk. Enough, enough, *Careless*, bring your apprehension along with you. [Exit.

Care. Pert coxcomb.

Mel. Faith 'tis a good-natur'd coxcomb, and has very enter-

entertaining follies—You must be more humane to him ; at this juncture, it will do me service. I'll tell you, I would have mirth continued this day at any rate : tho' patience purchase folly, and attention be paid with noise : There are times when sense may be unseasonable, as well as truth. Pr'ythee do thou wear none to day ; but allow *Briſk* to have wit, that thou may'ſt ſeem a fool.

Care. Why, how now, why this extravagant propoſition ?

Mel. O, I would have no room for ſerious deſign, for I am jealous of a plot. I would have noiſe and impertinence keep my Lady *Touchwood's* head from working : ' For hell is not more buſy than her brain, nor contains ' more devils, than that imaginations.'

Care. I thought your fear of her had been over—Is not to-morrow appointed for your marriage with *Cynthia*, and her father, Sir *Paul Plyant*, come to ſettle the writings this day, on purpoſe ?

Mel. True ; but you ſhall judge whether I have not reaſon to be alarm'd. None beſides you, and *Maſkwell*, are acquainted with the ſecret of my aunt *Touchwood's* violent paſſion for me. Since my firſt refusal of her addreſſes, ſhe has endeavour'd to do me all ill offices with my uncle ; yet has managed 'em with that ſubtilty, that to him they have born the face of kindneſs ; while her malice, like a dark lanthorn, only ſhone upon me, where it was directed. ' Still it gave me leſs perplexity to prevent the ſucceſs of her diſpleaſure, than to avoid the im- ' portunities of her love ; and of two evils, I thought my ' ſelf favour'd in her averſion : ' but whether urg'd by her deſpair, and the ſhort proſpect of time ſhe ſaw, to accompliſh her deſigns ; whether the hopes of revenge, or of her love, terminated in the view of this my marriage with *Cynthia*, I know not ; but this morning ſhe ſurpriz'd me in my own chamber.—

Care. Was there ever ſuch a fury ! ' 'tis well nature ' has not put it into her ſex's power to raviſh.'——Well, bleſs us ! proceed. What follow'd ?

Mel. ' What at firſt amaz'd me ; for I look'd to have ſeen ' her in all the tranſports of a ſlighted and revengeful wo- ' man ; but when I expected thunder from her voice, and
A 4 ' lightning

‘lightning in her eyes; I saw her melted into tears, and hush’d into a sigh.’ It was long before either of us spoke, passion had ty’d her tongue, and amazement mine.—In short, the consequence was thus, she omitted nothing that the most violent love could urge, or tender words express; which when she saw had no effect, but still I pleaded honour and nearness of blood to my uncle; then came the storm I fear’d at first: For starting from my bed-side like a fury, she flew to my sword, and with much ado I prevented her doing me or herself a mischief: Having disarm’d her in a gust of passion she left me, and in a resolution, confirm’d by a thousand curses, not to close her eyes, ’till they had seen my ruin.

Care. Exquisite woman! But what ‘the devil’ does she think, thou hast no more sense, than to get an heir ‘upon her body’ to disinherit thyself: for as I take it, this settlement upon you, is, with a proviso, that your uncle have no children.

Mel. It is so. Well, the service you are to do me, will be a pleasure to yourself; I must get you to engage my Lady *Plyant* all this evening, that my pious aunt may not work her to her interest. And if you chance to secure her to yourself, you may incline her to mine. She’s handsome, and knows it; is very silly, and thinks she has sense, and has an old fond husband.

Care. I confess a very fair foundation, for a lover to build upon.

Mel. For my Lord *Froth*, he and his wife will be sufficiently taken up, with admiring one another, and *Brisk*’s galantry, as they call it. I’ll observe my uncle myself, and *Jack Maskwell* has promised me, to watch my aunt narrowly, and give me notice upon any suspicion. As for Sir *Paul*, my wise father-in-law that is to be, my dear *Cynthia* has such a share in his fatherly fondness, he would scarce make her a moment uneasy, to have her happy hereafter.

Care. So, you have mann’d your works: but I wish you may not have the weakest guard, where the enemy is strongest.

Mel. Maskwell, you mean: pr’ythee why should you suspect him?

Care.

Care. Faith I cannot help it, you know I never lik'd him; I am a little superstitious in physiognomy,

Mel. He has obligations of gratitude to bind him to me; his dependence upon my uncle is through my means.

Care. Upon your aunt you mean.

Mel. My aunt!

Care. I'm mistaken if there be not a familiarity between them, you do not suspect: notwithstanding her passion for you.

Mel. Pooh, pooh, nothing in the world but his design to do me service; and he endeavours to be well in her esteem, that he may be able to effect it.

Care. Well, I shall be glad to be mistaken; but your aunt's aversion in her revenge, cannot be any way so effectually shewn, as in promoting a means to disinherit you. She is handsome and cunning, and naturally amorous. *Maskwell* is flesh and blood at best and opportunities between them are frequent. His affection to you have confessed, is grounded upon his interest, that you have transplanted; and should it take root in my lady, I don't see what you can expect from the fruit.

Mel. I confess the consequence is visible, were your suspicions just.—But see, the company is broke up, let's meet 'em.

Enter Lord Touchwood, Lord Froth, Sir Paul Plyant, and Brisk.

Ld. Touch. Out upon't, nephew—Leave your father-in-law, and me to maintain our ground against young people.

Mel. I beg your lordship's pardon—We were just returning.———

Sir Paul. Were you, son? gadsbud much better as it is——Good, strange! I swear I'm almost tipsy—t'other bottle would have been too powerful for me,—as sure as can be it would.—We wanted your company, but *Mr. Brisk*—Where is he? I swear and vow, he's a most facetious person—and the best company.—And my *Lord Froth*, your lordship is so merry a man, he, he, he!

Ld. Froth. O foy, *Sir Paul*, what do you mean? Merry! O barbarous! I'd as lief you call'd me fool.

Sir Paul. Nay, I protest and vow now, 'tis true; when

Mr. *Briſk* jokes, your lordſhip's laugh does ſo become you, he, he he!

Ld. *Froth*. Ridiculous! Sir *Paul*, you're ſtrangely miſtaken, I find Champagne is powerful. I aſſure you, Sir *Paul*, I laugh at nobody's jeſt but my own, or a Lady's; I aſſure you, Sir *Paul*.

Briſk. How? how, my lord? what affront my wit! Let me periſh, do I never ſay any thing worthy to be laugh'd at?

Ld. *Froth*. O foy, don't miſapprehend me, I don't ſay ſo, for I often ſmile at your conceptions. But there is nothing more unbecoming a man of quality, than to laugh; 'tis ſuch a vulgar expreſſion of the paſſion! every body can laugh. Then eſpecially to laugh at the jeſt of an inferior perſon, or when any body elſe of the ſame quality does not laugh with one; ridiculous! to be pleaſed with what pleaſes the croud! Now when I laugh, I always laugh alone.

Briſk. I ſuppoſe that's becauſe you laugh at your own jeſts, I'gad, ha, ha, ha!

Ld. *Froth*. He, he! I ſwear tho', your raillery provokes me to a ſmile.

Briſk. Ay, my lord, it's a ſign I hit you in the teeth, if you ſhew 'em.

Ld. *Froth*. He, he, he! I ſwear that's ſo very pretty, I can't forbear.

Care. I find a quibble bears more ſway in your lordſhip's face, than a jeſt.

Ld. *Touch*. Sir *Paul*, if you pleaſe we'll retire to the ladies, and drink a diſh of tea, to ſettle our heads.

Sir *Paul*. With all my heart.—Mr. *Briſk*, you'll come to us,—or call me when you joke, I'll be ready to laugh incontinently. [Exit.]

Mel. But does you lordſhip never ſee comedies?

Ld. *Froth*. O yes, ſometimes,—But I never laugh.

Mel. No?

Ld. *Froth*. Oh, no,—Never laugh indeed, ſir.

Care. No! why what d'ye go there for?

Ld. *Froth*. To diſtinguiſh myſelf from the commonality, and mortify the poets; the fellows grow ſo conceited, when any of their fooliſh wit prevails upon the ſide-boxes.

I ſwear

—I swear,——he, he, he! I have often constrain'd my inclinations to laugh,——he, he! he's to avoid giving them encouragement.

Mel. You are cruel to yourself, my lord, as well as malicious to them.

Ld. Froth. I confess I did myself some violence at first, but now I think I have conquer'd it.

Briek. Let me perish, my lord, but there is something very particular in the humour; 'tis true, it makes against wit, and I'm sorry for some friends of mine that write, but—I'gad, I love to be malicious.—Nay, deuce take me there's wit in't too—And wit must be foil'd by wit; cut a diamond with a diamond; no other way, I'gad.

Ld. Froth. Oh, I thought you would not be long, before you found out the wit.

Care. Wit! In what? Where the devil's the wit, in not laughing when a man has a mind to't?

Briek. O Lord, why can't you find it out?—Why there 'tis, in the not laughing—Don't you apprehend me?—My lord, *Careless* is a very honest fellow, but hark'ye, you understand me, somewhat heavy, a little shallow, or so.—Why I'll tell you now, suppose now you come up to me—Nay, pr'ythee *Careless* be instructed. Suppose, as I was saying, you come up to me holding your sides, and laughing, as if you would—Well—I look grave, and ask the cause of this immoderate mirth—You laugh on still, and are not able to tell me—Still I look grave, not so much as smile.——

Care. Smile, no, what the devil should you smile at, when you suppose I can't tell you!

Briek. Pshaw, pshaw, pr'ythee don't interrupt me.—But I tell you, you shall tell me—at last—But it shall be a great while first.

Care. Well, but pry'thee don't let it be a great while, because I long to have it over.

Briek. Well then, you tell me some good jest, or very witty thing, laughing all the while as if you were ready to die—and I hear it, and look thus.—Would not you be disappointed?

Care. No; for if it were a witty thing, I should not expect you to understand it.

Ld. Froth. O foy, Mr. *Careless*, all the world allow Mr. *Briſk* to have wit; my wife ſays, he has a great deal. I hope you think her a judge.

Briſk. Pooh, my lord, his voice goes for nothing.—I can't tell how to make him apprehend.—Take it t'other way. Suppose I ſay a witty thing to you?

Care. Then I ſhall be diſappointed indeed.

Mel. Let him alone, *Briſk*, he is obſtinately bent not to be inſtructed.

Briſk. I'm ſorry for him, the deuce take me.

Mel. Shall we go to the ladies, my lord?

Ld. Froth. With all my heart, methinks we are a ſolitude without 'em.

Mel. Or, what ſay you to another bottle of Champagne?

Ld. Froth. O, for the univerſe, not a drop more I beſeech you. O intemperate! I have a flushing in my face already. [*Takes out a pocket-glaſs, and looks in it.*]

Briſk. Let me ſee, let me ſee, my lord, I broke my glaſs that was in the lid of my ſnuff-box. Hum! deuce take me, I have encourag'd a pimple here too.

[*Takes the glaſs and looks.*]

Ld. Froth. Then you muſt mortify him with a patch; my wife ſhall ſupply you. Come, gentlemen, *allons*, here is company coming. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Lady Touchwood, and Maskwell.

L. T. I'll hear no more——You're falſe and ungrateful; come, I know you're falſe.

Mask. I have been frail, I confeſs, madam, for your ladyſhip's ſervice.

L. T. That I ſhould truſt a man, whom I had known betray his friend!

Mask. What friend have I betray'd? Or to whom?

L. T. Your fond friend *Mellefont*, and to me; can you deny it?

Mask. I do not.

L. T. Have you not wrong'd my lord, who has been a father to you in your wants, and given you being? Have you not wrong'd him in the higheſt manner, 'in his bed'?

Mask. With your ladyſhip's help, and for your ſervice, as I told you before I can't deny that neither.—Any thing more, madam?

L. T.

L. T. More! audacious villain. O, what's more, is most my shame,——Have you not dishonour'd me?

Mask. No, that I deny; for I never told in all my life: so that accusation's answer'd; on to the next.

L. T. Death, do you dally with my passion? Insolent devil! But have a care,——Provoke me not; for, 'by the eternal fire,' you shall not 'scape my vengeance.—calm villain! How unconcern'd he stands, confessing treachery, and ingratitude! Is there a vice more black! —O I have excuses, thousands for my faults; fire in my temper, passions in my soul, apt to ev'ry provocation; oppress'd at once with love, and with despair. But a sedate, a thinking villain, whose black blood runs temperately bad, what excuse can clear?

Mask. Will you be in temper, madam? I would not talk not to be heard. I have been [*She walks about disorder'd.*] a very great rogue for your sake, and you reproach me with it; I am ready to be a rogue still to do you service; and you are flinging conscience and honour in my face, to rebate my inclinations. How am I to behave myself? You know I am your creature; my life and fortune in your power; to disoblige you, brings me certain ruin. Allow it, I would betray you, I would not be a traitor to myself: I don't pretend to honesty, because you know I am a rascal: but I would convince you from the necessity of my being firm to you.

L. T. Necessity, impudence! can no gratitude incline you, no obligations touch you? 'Have not my fortune, and my person been subjected to your pleasure?' Were you not in the nature of a servant, and have not I in effect made you lord of all, of me, and of my lord? Where is that humble love, the languishing, that adoration, which was once paid me, and everlastingly engaged?

Mask. Fixt, rooted in my heart, whence nothing can remove 'em, yet you ——

L. T. Yet, what yet?

Mask. Nay misconceive me not, madam, when I say I have had a gen'rous, and a faithful passion, which you had never favour'd, but through revenge and policy.

L. T. Ha!

Mask,

Mask Look you, madam, we are alone,——Pray contain yourself, and hear me. You know you lov'd your nephew, when I first sigh'd for you; I quickly found it; an argument that I lov'd; for with that art you veil'd your passion, 'twas imperceptible to all but jealous eyes. This discovery made me bold, I confess it; for by it, I thought you in my power. Your nephew's scorn of you, added to my hopes; I watch'd the occasion, and took you, just repuls'd by him, warm at once, with love and indignation; your disposition, my arguments, and happy opportunity, accomplish'd my design, 'I prest the yielding minute, and was blest.' How I have lov'd you since, words have not shewn, then how should words express?

L. T. Well, mollifying devil!——And have I not met your love with forward fire?

Mask. Your zeal I grant was ardent, but misplac'd; there was revenge in view; 'that woman's idol had de-fil'd the temple of the god, and love was made a mock-worship.——A son and heir would have edg'd young *Mellefont* upon the brink of ruin, and left him none but you to catch at for prevention.'

L. T. Again, provoke me! do you wind me like a larum, only to rouse my own still'd soul for your diversion! confusion!

Mask. Nay, madam, I'm gone, if you relapse,——What needs this? I say nothing but what you yourself, in open hours of love, have told me. Why should you deny it? Nay, how can you? Is not all this present heat owing to the same fire? Do you not love him still? How have I this day offended you, but in not breaking off his match with *Cynthia*? Which ere to-morrow shall be done,——had you but patience.

L. T. How, what said you, *Maskwell*,——Another caprice to unwind my temper?

Mask. By Heav'n, no; I am your slave, the slave of all your pleasures; and will not rest 'till I have given you peace, would you suffer me.

L. T. O *Maskwell*, in vain I do disguise me from thee, thou know'st me, know'st the very inmost windings and recesses of my soul.—O *Mellefont*! I burn; married

ried to morrow! despair strikes me. Yet my soul knows I hate him too: let him but once be mine, and next immediate ruin seize him.

Mask. Compose yourself, you shall possess and ruin him too,——Will that please you?

L. T. How, how? Thou dear, thou precious villain, how?

Mask. You have already been tampering with my Lady *Plyant*.

L. T. I have: She is ready for any impression I think fit.

Mask. She must be thoroughly persuaded, that *Mellefont* loves her.

L. T. She is so credulous that way naturally, and likes him so well, that she will believe it faster than I can persuade her. But I don't see what you can propose from such a trifling design; for her first conversing with *Mellefont*, will convince her of the contrary.

Mask. I know it.——I don't depend upon it.——But it will prepare something else, and gain us leisure to lay a stronger plot: If I gain a little time, I shall not want contrivance.

*One minute gives invention to destroy,
What to rebuild, will a whole age employ.* [Exeunt.

A C T II.

Enter Lady Froth and Cynthia.

Cynt. **I**NDEED, madam! Is it possible your ladyship could have been so much in love?

L. Froth. I could not sleep; I did not sleep one wink for three weeks together.

Cynt. Prodigious! I wonder, want of sleep, and so much love, and so much wit as your ladyship has, did not turn your brain.

L. Froth. O my dear *Cynthia*, you must not rally your friend.——But really, as you say, I wonder too,——

But then I had a way.—For between you and I, I had whimsies and vapours, but I gave them vent.

Cynt. How pray, madam.

L. Froth. Oh, I writ, writ abundantly—Do you never write.

Cynt. Write, what?

L. Froth. Songs, elegies, satires, encomiums, panegyrics, lampoons, plays, or heroic poems.

Cynt. O lord, not I, madam; I'm content to be a courteous reader.

L. Froth. O inconsistent! In love, and not write! If my lord and I had been both of your temper, we had never come together,—O bless me; what a sad thing would that have been, if my lord and I should never have met!

Cynt. Then neither my lord nor you would ever have met with your match, on my conscience.

L. Froth. O' my conscience no more we should; thou say'st right—For sure my Lord *Froth* is as fine a gentleman, and as much a man of quality! ah! nothing at all of the common air,—I think I may say he wants nothing, but a blue ribbon and a star, to make him shine, the very phosphorus of our hemisphere. Do you understand those two hard words? If you don't, I'll explain 'em to you.

Cynt. Yes, yes, madam, I'm not so ignorant.—At least I won't own it, to be troubled with your instructions. [*Aside.*]

L. Froth. Nay, I beg your pardon; but being deriv'd from the *Greek*, I thought you might have escap'd the etymology.—But I'm the more amaz'd, to find you a woman of letters, and not write! bless me! how can *Mellefont* believe you love him?

Cynt. Why faith, madam, he that won't take my word, shall never have it under my hand.

L. Froth. I vow *Mellefont*'s a pretty gentleman, but methinks he wants a manner.

Cynt. A manner! what's that, madam?

L. Froth. Some distinguishing quality, as for example, the *bell air* or *brillant* of Mr. *Brisk*; the solemnity, yet complaisance of my lord, or something of his own that should look a little *Je-ne-scai quoi*; he is too much a mediocrity, in my mind.

Cynt.

Cynt. He does not indeed affect either pertness or formality; for which I like him: Here he comes.

L. Froth. And my lord with him: Pray observe the difference. *Enter Lord Froth, Mellefont and Brisk*

Cynt. Impertinent creature! I could almost be angry with her now. *[Aside.*

L. Froth. My lord, I have been telling *Cynthia*, how much I have been in love with you; I swear I have; I'm not ashamed to own it now; Ah! it makes my heart leap, I vow, I sigh when I think on't: my dear lord! Ha, ha, ha! do you remember, my lord?

[Squeezes him by the hand, looks kindly on him, sighs, and then laughs out.]

Ld. Froth. Pleasant creature! perfectly well, ah! that look, ay, there it is; who could resist! 'twas so my heart was made a captive first, and ever since t'has been in love with happy slavery.

L. Froth. O that tongue, that dear deceitful tongue! that charming softness in your mien and your expression, and then your bow! good my lord, bow as you did when I gave you my picture, here suppose this my picture—*[Gives him a pocket glass.]* Pray mind my lord; ah! he bows charmingly; nay, my lord, you shan't kiss it so much; I shall grow jealous, I vow now.

[He bows profoundly low, then kisses the glass.]

Ld. Froth. I saw myself there, and kiss'd it for your sake.

L. Froth. Ah! gallantry to the last degree—*Mr. Brisk*, you're a judge; was ever any thing so well bred as my lord?

Brisk. Never any thing; but your ladyship, let me perish.

L. Froth. O prettily turn'd again; let me die but you have a great deal of wit: *Mr. Mellefont*, don't you think *Mr. Brisk* has a world of wit?

Mel. O, yes, madam.

Brisk. O dear, madam——

L. Froth. An infinite deal!

Brisk. O Heav'ns, madam——

L. Froth. More wit than any body.

Brisk. I'm everlastingly your humble servant, deuce take me, madam.

Ld. Froth. Don't you think us a happy couple?

Cynt. I vow, my lord, I think you the happiest couple in the world, for you're not only happy in one another,

ther, and when you are together, but happy in yourselves, and by yourselves.

Ld. *Froth*. I hope *Mellefont* will make a good husband too.

Cynt. 'Tis my interest to believe he will, my lord.

Ld. *Froth*. D'ye think he'll love you as well as I do my wife? I'm afraid not.

Cynt. I believe he'll love me better.

Ld. *Froth*. Heav'ns! that can never be; but why do you think so?

Cynt. Because he has not so much reason to be fond of himself.

Ld. *Froth*. O your humble servant for that, dear madam; well, *Mellefont*, you'll be a happy creature.

Mel. Ay, my lord, I shall have the same reason for my happiness that your lordship has, I shall think myself happy.

Ld. *Froth*. Ah, that's all.

Brisk. [*To Lady Froth*] Your ladyship is in the right; but I'gad I'm wholly turn'd into satire. I confess I write but seldom, but when I do—keen *Iambicks* I'gad. But my lord was telling me, your ladyship has made an essay toward an heroic poem.

L. *Froth*. Did my lord tell you? Yes I vow, and the subject is my lord's love to me. And what do you think I call it? I dare swear you won't guess—*The Sillabub*, ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Because my lord's title's *Froth*, I'gad; ha, ha, ha! deuce take me very *àpropos* and surprizing, ha, ha, ha!

L. *Froth*. He, ay, is not it?—And then I call my lord *Spumoso*; and myself, what d'ye think I call myself?

Brisk. *LaTilla* may be,—'gad I cannot tell,

L. *Froth*. *Biddy*, that's all; just my own name.

Brisk. *Biddy*! I'gad very pretty——Deuce take me if your ladyship has not the art of surprizing the most naturally in the world,—I hope you'll make me happy in communicating the poem.

L. *Froth*. O, you must be confident, I must ask your advice.

Brisk. I'm your humble servant, let me perish,—I presume your ladyship has read *Bosju*?

L. *Froth*. O yes, and *Rapin*, and *Dacier* upon *Aristotle* and

and *Horace*.—My lord, you must not be jealous, I'm communicating all to Mr. *Brisk*.

Ld. Froth, No, no, I'll allow Mr. *Brisk*; have you nothing about you to shew him, my dear?

L. Froth. Yes, I believe I have.—Mr. *Brisk*, come will you go into the next room? 'and there I'll shew you ' what I have.'

[*Exeunt L. Froth and Brisk.*]

Ld. Froth. I'll walk a turn in the garden, and come to you.

[*Exit.*]

Mel. You're thoughtful, *Cynthia*?

Cynt. I'm thinking, tho' marriage makes man and wife one flesh, it leaves 'em still two fools; and they become more conspicuous by setting off one another.

Mel. That's only when two fools meet, and their follies are oppos'd.

Cynt. Nay, I have known two wits meet, and by the opposition of their wit, render themselves as ridiculous as fools. 'Tis an odd game we're going to play at: What think you of drawing stakes, and giving over in time?

Mel. No, hang't, that's not endeavouring to win, because it's possible we may lose; since we have shuffled and cut, let's e'en turn up trump now.

Cynt. Then I find it's like cards, if either of us have a good hand it is an accident of fortune.

Mel. No, marriage is rather like a game at bowls, fortune indeed makes the match, and the two nearest, and sometimes the two farthest are together, but the game depends intirely upon judgment.

Cynt. Still it is a game, and consequently one of us must be a loser.

Mel. Not at all; only a friendly trial of skill, and the winnings to be laid out in an entertainment.—'What's ' here, the musick!—Oh, my lord has promised the ' company a new song, we'll get 'em to give it us by the ' way [*Musicians crossing the stage.*] Pray let us have the ' favour of you, to practice the song, before the company ' hear it,

‘SONG.

‘SONG.

I.

- ‘**C**Ynthia frowns when-e’er I woo to her,
 ‘ Yet she’s vex’d if I give over ;
 ‘ Much she fears I should undo her,
 ‘ But much more to lose her lover :
 ‘ Thus, in doubting, she refuses ;
 ‘ And not winning, thus she loses.

II.

- ‘ Pr’ythee, Cynthia, look behind you,
 ‘ Age and wrinkles will o’ertake you ;
 ‘ Then too late desire will find you,
 ‘ When the power must forsake you :
 ‘ Think, O think o’th’ sad condition,
 ‘ To be past, yet wish fruition.
 ‘ *Mel.* You shall have my thanks below.
 ‘ [To the musick, they go out.]

Enter Sir Paul and Lady Plyant.

Sir Paul. Gads-bud ! I am provok’d into a fermentation, as my Lady *Froth* says; was ever the like read of in story ?

L. P. *Sir Paul*, have patience ; let me alone to rattle him up.

Sir Paul. Pray your ladyship give me leave to be angry — I’ll rattle him up I warrant you. I’ll teach him with a *certiorari* to make love to my wife.

L. P. You teach him ! I’ll teach him myself and make him blush for his dishonourable notions of Lady *Plyant*’s rectitude ; so pray, *Sir Paul*, leave him to me and hold you contented.

‘ *Cynt.* Bless me, what makes my father in such a passion ? — I never saw him thus before.’

Sir Paul. Hold yourself contented, my Lady *Plyant* — I find passion coming upon me even to desperation, as the philosopher says ; and I cannot submit as formerly, therefore give way.

L. P. How now ! will you be pleased to retire, and —

Sir Paul. No marry will I not be pleased ; I am pleased to be angry, that’s my pleasure at this time.

‘ *Mel.* What can this mean !’

L. P.

L. P. Gads my life, the man's distracted: why how now, who are you? What am I? Slidikins can't I govern you? What did I marry you for? Am I not to be absolute and uncontrollable? Is it fit a woman of my spirit and conduct, should be contradicted in a matter of this concern?

Sir *Paul*. It concerns me, and only me;—Besides, I'm not to be govern'd at all times. When I am in tranquillity, my Lady *Plyant* shall command Sir *Paul*; but when I am provok'd to fury, I cannot incorporate with patience and reason,—as soon may tigers match with tigers, lambs with lambs, and every creature couple with its foe, as the poet says.——

L. P. He's hot-headed still! 'Tis in vain to talk to you; but remember I have a curtain-lecture for you, you disobedient, headstrong brute.

Sir *Paul*. No, 'tis because I won't be headstrong, because I won't be a brute, and have my head fortify'd, that I am thus exasperated,—But I will protect my honour, and yonder is the violator of my fame.

L. P. 'Tis my honour that is concern'd, and the violation was intended to me. Your honour! You have none but what is in my keeping, and I can dispose of it when I please—therefore don't provoke me.

Sir *Paul*. Hum, gads-bud she says true—Well, my lady, march on, I will fight under you then: I am convinced, as far as passion will permit.

[*L. Plyant and Sir Paul come up to Mellefont.*]

L. P. Inhuman and treacherous——

Sir *Paul*. Thou serpent and first tempter of woman-kind.——

Cynt. Bless me! fir; madam; what mean you?

Sir *Paul*. *Tby*, *Tby*, come away *Tby*, touch him not, come hither, girl, go not near him, there's nothing but deceit about him; snakes are in his peruke, and the crocodile of *Nilus* is in his wicked appetite; he wou'd devour thy fortune and starve thee alive.

L. P. Dishonourable, impudent creature!

Mel. For Heav'n's sake, madam, to whom do you direct this language!

L. P.

L. P. Have I behav'd myself with all the decorum and nicety, besitting the person of Sir *Paul's* wife? Have I preserv'd my honour as it were in a snow-house for these three years past? Have I been white and unfully'd even by Sir *Paul* himself?

Sir *Paul*. Nay, she has been an invincible wife, even to me, that's the truth on't.

L. P. Have I, I say, preserv'd myself, like a fair sheet of paper, for you to make a blot upon?——

Sir *Paul*. And she shall make a simile with any woman in *England*.

Mel. I am so amaz'd, I know not what to say.

Sir *Paul*. Do you think my daughter, this pretty creature; gads-bud she's a wife for a cherubin! Do you think her fit for nothing but to be a stalking horse, to stand before you, while you take aim at my wife; gads-bud I was never angry before in my life, and I'll never be appeas'd again.

Mel. Confusion! this is my aunt; such malice can be engendred no where else. [Aside.]

L. P. Sir *Paul*, take *Cynthia* from his sight; leave me to strike him with the remorse of his intended crime.

Cynt. Pray, sir, stay, hear him, I dare affirm he's innocent.

Sir *Paul*. Innocent! Why! hark'ee, come hither, *Thy*, hark'ee, I had it from his aunt, my sister *Touchwood*,—gads-bud he does not care a farthing for any thing of thee, but thy portion, why he's in love with my wife; he would have tantaliz'd thee, and made a cuckold of thy poor father,——and that would certainly have broke my heart—'I'm sure if ever I should have horns, they 'would kill me; they would never come kindly, I should 'die of 'em, like a child, that was cutting his teeth——' I should indeed, *Thy*—therefore come away;' but Providence has prevented all, therefore come away, when I bid you.

Cynt. I must obey. [Exeunt Sir Paul and Cynthia.]

L. P. O, such a thing! the impiety of it startles me—to wrong so good, so fair a creature, and one that loves you tenderly——'tis a barbarity of barbarities, and nothing could be guilty of it——

Mel.

Mel. But the greatest villain imagination can form, I grant it; and next to the villainy of such a fact, is the villainy of aspersing me with the guilt. How? which way was I to wrong her? For yet I understand you not.

L. P. Why, gads my life, cousin *Mellefont*, you cannot be so peremptory as to deny it; when I tax you with it to your face; for now *Sir Paul's* gone, you are *coram nobis*.

Mel. By Heav'n, I love her more than life, or——

L. P. Fiddle, faddle, don't tell me of this and that, and ev'ry thing in the world, but give me mathemacular demonstration, answer me directly—But I have not patience—Oh! the impiety of it, as I was saying, and the unparallel'd wickedness! O merciful father! How could you think to reverse nature so, to make the daughter the means of procuring the mother?

Mel. The daughter to procure the mother!

L. P. Ay, for tho' I am not *Cynthia's* own mother, I am her father's wife; and that's near enough to make it incest.

Mel. Incest! O my precious aunt, and the devil in conjunction. *[Aside.*

L. P. O reflect upon the horror of that, and then the guilt of deceiving every body; marrying the daughter, only to dishonour the bed of the father; and then seducing me, 'debauching my purity, and perverting me' from the road of virtue, in which I have trod thus long, and never made one trip, not one *faux pas*; 'O consider it, what would you have to answer for, if you should provoke me to frailty? Alas! humanity is feeble, Heav'n knows! very feeble, and unable to support itself.'

Mel. Where am I? Is it day? and am I awake? madam——

L. P. And nobody knows how circumstances may happen together.—To my thinking, now I could resist the strongest temptation,—But yet I know, 'tis impossible for me to know whether I could or not, there's no certainty in the things of this life.

Mel. Madam, pray give me leave to ask you one question.——

L. P.

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L. P. O Lord, ask me the question, I'll swear, I'll swear it; I swear I'll deny it——therefore don't ask me, nay you shan't ask me, I swear I'll deny it. O Gemini, you have brought all the blood into my face; I warrant I am as red as a turkey-cock; O fy, cousin *Mellefont*!

Mel. Nay, madam, hear me; I mean——

L. P. Hear you, no, no; I'll deny you first, and hear you afterwards. For one does not know how ones mind may change upon hearing.—Hearing is one of the senses, and all the senses are fallible; I won't trust my honour, I assure you; my honour is infallible and uncomatible.

Mel. For Heav'n's sake, madam,——

L. P. O name it no more——Bless me, how can you talk of Heav'n! and have so much wickedness in your heart? May be you don't think it a sin.—They say some of you gentlemen don't think it a sin.—'May be it is no 'sin to them that don't think it so;' indeed, if I did not think it a sin—But still my honour, if it were no sin,—But then, to marry my daughter, for the conveniency of frequent opportunities,—I'll never consent to that, as sure as can be, I'll break the match.

Mel. Death and amazement.—Madam, upon my knees——

L. P. Nay, nay, rise up, come you shall see my good-nature. I know love is powerful, and no body can help his passion: 'Tis not your fault; nor I swear it is not mine,—How can I help it, if I have charms? And how can you help it, if you are made a captive? 'I swear it 'is pity it should be a fault,—But my honour,—well, 'but your honour too,—but the sin!—well but the necessity.'—O lord, here's somebody coming, I dare not stay. Well, you must consider of your crime; and strive as much as can be against it,—strive be sure—But don't be melancholick, don't despair.—But never think that I'll grant you any thing; O lord, no.—But be sure you lay aside all thoughts of the marriage, for tho' I know you don't love *Cynthia*, only as a blind for your passion to me; yet it will make me jealous.—O lord, what did I say? Jealous! no, no, I can't be jealous, for I must not love you,—therefore don't hope.—But don't despair neither.—O, they're coming, I must fly. [*Exit.*

Mel.

Mel. [*After a pause.*] So then,—spite of my care and foresight, I am caught, caught in my security.—Yet this was but a shallow artifice, unworthy of my Machiavelian aunt: there must be more behind, ‘this is but the first flash, the priming of her engine; destruction follows hard, if not most presently prevented.’

Enter Maskwell.

Maskwell, welcome, thy presence is a view of land, appearing to my shipwreck’d hopes: the witch has rais’d the storm, and her ministers have done their work; you see the vessels are parted.

Mask. I know it; I met Sir *Paul* towing away *Cynthia*: come, trouble not your head, I’ll join you together, ere to-morrow morning, or drown between you in the attempt.

Mel. There’s comfort in a hand stretch’d out, to one that’s sinking; tho’ ne’er so far off.

Mask. No sinking, nor no danger,—Come, cheer up; why you don’t know, that while I plead for you, your aunt has given me a retaining fee;—Nay, I am your greatest enemy, and she does but journey-work under me.

Mel. Ha! How’s this?

Mask. What d’ye think of my being employ’d in the execution of all her plots? Ha, ha, ha! nay it’s true; I have undertaken to break the match, I have undertaken to make your uncle disinheret you, to get you turn’d out of doors; and to—Ha, ha, ha! I can’t tell you for laughing,—O she has open’d her heart to me,—I am to turn you a grazing, and to—Ha, ha, ha! marry *Cynthia* myself; there’s a plot for you.

Mel. Ha! O I see, I see my rising sun! Light breaks thro’ clouds upon me, and I shall live in day—O my *Maskwell*! How shall I thank or praise thee: thou hast outwitted woman.—But tell me, how could’st thou thus get into her confidence?—Ha! how? But was it her contrivance to persuade my Lady *Plyant* to this extravagant belief?

Mask. It was, and to tell you the truth I encourag’d it for your diversion: tho’ it made you a little uneasy

for the present, yet the reflexion of it must needs be entertaining,—I warrant she was very violent at first.

Mel. Ha, ha, ha! ay, a very fury; but I was most afraid of her violence at last,—‘If you had not come as you did, I don’t know what she might have attempted.’

Mask. Ha, ha, ha! I know her temper.—Well, you must know then, that all my contrivances were but bubbles; ’till at last I pretended to have been long secretly in love with *Cynthia*; that did my business; that convinc’d your aunt, I might be trusted; since it was as much my interest as hers to break the match: then, she thought my jealousy might qualify me to assist her in her revenge. And, in short, in that belief, told me the secrets of her heart. At length we made this agreement, if I accomplish her designs (as I told you before) she has engag’d to put *Cynthia* with all her fortune into my power.

Mel. She is most gracious in her favour,—Well, and dear *Jack*, how hast thou contrived?

Mask. I would not have you stay to hear it now; for I don’t know, but she may come this way; I am to meet her anon; after that, I’ll tell you the whole matter; be here in this gallery an hour hence, by that time I imagine our consultation may be over.

Mel. I will, ’till then success attend thee. [Exit.

Mask. ’Till then success will attend me; for when I meet you, I meet the only obstacle to my fortune. *Cynthia* let thy beauty gild my crimes; and whatsoever I commit of treachery or deceit, shall be imputed to me as a merit—Treachery, what treachery? Love cancels all the bonds of friendship, and sets men right upon their first foundations.

Duty to kings, piety to parents, gratitude to benefactors, and fidelity to friends, are different and particular ties: but the name of rival cuts ’em all asunder, and is a general acquittance—Rival is equal, and love like death an universal leveller of mankind. Ha! But is there not such a thing as honesty? Yes, and whosoever has it about him, bears an enemy in his breast: for your honest man, as I take it, is that nice, scrupulous, conscientious person, who will cheat no body but himself; such
another

another coxcomb, as your wise man, who is too hard for all the world, and will be made a fool of by nobody, but himself: ha, ha, ha! Well for wisdom and honesty, give me cunning and hypocrisy; oh, 'tis such a pleasure, to angle for fair-fac'd fools! Then that hungry gudgeon credulity will bite at any thing—Why, let me see, I have the same face, the same words and accents, when I speak what I do think; and when I speak what I do not think—the very same—and dear dissimulation is the only art, not to be known from nature.

*Why will mankind be fools, and be deceiv'd?
And why are friends and lovers oaths believ'd?
When, each, who searches strictly his own mind,
May so much fraud and power of baseness find.* [Exit.

A C T III.

Enter Lord Touchwood and Lady Touchwood.

L. T. **M**Y lord, can you blame my brother *Plyant*, if he refuses his daughter upon this provocation? The contract's void by this unheard of impiety.

Ld. T. I don't believe it true; he has better principles—Pho, 'tis nonsense. Come, come, I know my Lady *Plyant* 'has a large eye, and wou'd centre every 'thing in her own circle;' 'tis not the first time she has mistaken respect for love, and made Sir *Paul* jealous of the civility of an undesigning person, the better to bespeak his security in her unfeigned pleasures.

L. T. You censure hardly, my lord; my sister's honour is very well known.

Ld. T. Yes, I believe I know some that have been familiarly acquainted with it. This is a little trick wrought by some pityful contriver, envious of my nephew's merit.

L. T. Nay, my lord, it may be so, and I hope it will be found so: but that will require some time; for in such a case as this, demonstration is necessary.

Ld. T. There should have been demonstration of the contrary too, before it had been believ'd——

L. T. So I suppose there was.

Ld. T. How? where? when?

L. T. That I can't tell; nay I don't say there was—I am willing to believe as favourably of my nephew as I can.

Ld. T. I don't know that. [*Half aside.*]

L. T. How? Don't you believe that, say you, my lord?

Ld. T. No, I don't say so—I confess I am troubled to find you so cold in his defence.

L. T. His defence! bless me, would you have me defend an ill thing.

Ld. T. You believe it then?

L. T. I don't know; I am very unwilling to speak my thoughts in any thing that may be to my cousin's disadvantage; besides, I find, my lord, you are prepared to receive an ill impression from any opinion of mine which is not consenting with your own: but since I am like to be suspected in the end, and 'tis a pain any longer to dissemble, I own it to you; in short I do believe it, nay, and can believe any thing worse, if it were laid to his charge—Don't ask me my reasons, my lord, for they are not fit to be told you.

Ld. T. I'm amaz'd, here must be something more than ordinary in this, [*Aside.*] Not fit to be told me, madam? You can have no interests, wherein I am not concern'd, and consequently the same reasons ought to be convincing to me, which create your satisfaction or disquiet.

L. T. But those which cause my disquiet, I am willing to have remote from your hearing. Good my lord, don't press me.

Ld. T. Don't oblige me to press you.

L. T. Whatever it was, 'tis past: and that is better to be unknown which cannot be prevented; therefore let me beg you to rest satisfy'd——

Ld. T. When you have told me, I will——

L. T. You won't.

Ld. T. By my life, my dear, I will.

L. T.

L. T. What if you can't?

Ld. T. How? Then I must know, nay I will: no more trifling—I charge you tell me—By all our mutual peace to come; upon your duty——

L. T. Nay, my lord, you need say no more, to make me lay my heart before you, but don't be thus transported; compose yourself: it is not of concern, to make you lose one minute's temper. 'Tis not indeed, my dear. Nay, by this kiss you shan't be angry. O lord, I wish I had not told you any thing.—Indeed, my lord, you have frightened me. Nay, look pleas'd, I'll tell you.

Ld. T. Well, well.

L. T. Nay, but will you be calm—indeed it's nothing but——

Ld. T. But what?

L. T. But will you promise me not to be angry—Nay you must—Not to be angry with *Mellefont*—I dare swear he's sorry—and were it to do again, would not——

Ld. T. Sorry, for what? 'Death, you rack me with delay.

L. T. Nay, no great matter, only—Well I have your promise,—Pho, why nothing, only your nephew had a mind to amuse himself, sometimes with a little gallantry towards me. Nay, I can't think he meant any thing seriously, but me thought it look'd oddly.

Ld. T. Confusion and hell, what do I hear!

L. T. Or, may be, he thought he was not enough akin to me, upon your account, and had a mind to create a nearer relation on his own; a lover you know, my lord—Ha, ha, ha! Well but that's all—Now you have it; well remember your promise, my lord, and don't take any notice of it to him.

Ld. T. No, no, no—'Damnation!'

L. T. Nay, I swear you must not—A little harmless mirth—Only misplac'd, that's all—But if it were more, 'tis over now, and all's well. For my part, I have forgot it; and so has he, I hope—for I have not heard any thing from him these two days.

Ld. T. These two days! Is it so fresh? Unnatural villain! 'Death, I'll have him stripp'd and turn'd naked

out of my doors, this moment, and let him rot and perish incestuous brute!

L. T. O for heav'n's sake, my lord, you'll ruin me if you take such public notice of it, it will be a town-talk: consider your own and my honour—nay, I told you you would not be satisfied when you knew it.

Ld. T. Before I've done, I will be satisfy'd. Ungrateful monster, how long?—

L. T. Lord, I don't know: I wish my lips had grown together when I told you—Almost a twelvemonth—Nay, I won't tell you any more, 'till you are yourself. Pray, my lord, don't let the company see you in this disorder—Yet, I confess, I can't blame you; for I think I was never so surpriz'd in my life——Who would have thought my nephew could have so misconstrued my kindness—But will you go into your closet, and recover your temper. I'll make an excuse of sudden business to the company, and come to you. Pray, good dear my lord, let me beg you do now: I'll come immediately, and tell you all; will you, my lord?

Ld. T. I will—I am mute with wonder.

L. T. Well, but go now, here's some body coming.

Ld. T. Well, I go—You won't stay, for I would hear more of this. [Exit.

L. T. I follow instantly—So.

Enter Maskwell.

Mask. This was a master-piece, and did not need my help—tho' I stood ready for a cue to come in and confirm all, had there been occasion.

L. T. Have you seen *Mellefont*?

Mask. I have; and am to meet him here about this time.

L. T. How does he bear his disappointment?

Mask. Secure in my assistance, he seem'd not much afflicted, but rather laugh'd at the shallow artifice, which so little time must of necessity discover. Yet he is apprehensive of some farther design of yours, and has engaged me to watch you. I believe he will hardly be able to prevent your plot, yet I would have you use caution and expedition.

L. T. Expedition indeed; for all we do, must be perform'd in the remaining part of this ev'ning, and before the

the

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the company break up; lest my lord should cool, and have an opportunity to talk with him privately—My lord must not see him again.

Mask. By no means, therefore you must aggravate my lord's displeasure to a degree that will admit of no conference with him.—What think you of mentioning me?

L. T. How?

Mask. To my lord, as having been privy to *Mellefont's* design upon you, but still using my utmost endeavours to dissuade him: tho' my friendship and love to him has made me conceal it; yet you may say, I threatened the next time he attempted any thing of that kind, to discover it to my lord.

L. T. To what end is this?

Mask. It will confirm my lord's opinion of my honour and honesty, and create in him a new confidence in me, which (should this design miscarry) will be necessary to the forming another plot that I have in my head—To cheat you, as well as the rest [Aside]

L. T. I'll do it:—I'll tell him you hindred him 'once from forcing me.'

Mask. 'Excellent! Your ladyship has a most improving 'fancy.' You had best go to my lord, keep him as long as you can in his closet, and I doubt not but you will mould him to what you please; your guests are so engaged in their own follies and intrigues, they'll miss neither of you.

L. T. When shall we meet?—At eight this evening in my chamber, there rejoice at our success, 'and 'toy away an hour in mirth.'

Mask. I will not fail. [Exit. Lady Touch.]
So far all's well, 'yet I know what she means by 'toying away an hour well enough. Pox I have lost 'all appetite to her; yet she's a fine woman, and I lov'd 'her once. But I don't know, since I have been in a 'great measure kept by her, the case is alter'd; what 'was my pleasure is become my duty: and I have as 'little stomach to her now as if I were her husband.'
Should she smoke my design upon *Cynthia*, I were in a

fine pickle. She has a 'damn'd' penetrating head, and knows how to interpret a coldness the right way; therefore I must dissemble 'ardour and ecstasy, that's 'resolv'd: how easily and pleasantly is that dissembled 'before fruition! Pox on't that a man can't drink without quenching his thirst.' Ha! yonder comes *Mellefont* thoughtful. Let me think: meet her at eight—hum—ha! By Heav'n I have it—If I can speak to my lord before—Was it my brain or providence? No matter which—I will deceive 'em all, and yet secure myself, 'twas a lucky thought! Well, this double-dealing is a jewel. Here he comes, now for me.——

[Maskwell pretending not to see him, walks by him, and speaks as it were to himself.]

Enter Mellefont musing.

Mask. Mercy on us, what will the wickedness of this world come to?

Mel. How now, *Jack*? What, so full of contemplation that you run over!

Mask. I'm glad you're come, for I could not contain myself any longer; and was just going to give vent to a secret, which no body but you ought to drink down.—Your aunt's just gone from hence.

Mel. And having trusted thee with the secrets of her soul, thou art villainously bent to discover 'em all to me, ha?

Mask. I'm afraid my frailty leans that way——But I don't know whether I can in honour discover 'em all.

Mel. All, all man, what you may in honour betray her as far as she betrays herself. No tragical design upon my person, I hope.

Mask. No, but it's a comical design upon mine.

Mel. What dost thou mean?

Mask. Listen and be dumb, we have been bargaining about the rate of your ruin——

Mel. Like any two guardians to an orphan heiress—Well.

Mask. And whereas pleasure is generally paid with mischief, what mischief I do is to be paid with pleasure.

Mel. So when you've swallowed the potion, you sweeten your mouth with a plumb.

Mask.

Mask. You are merry, sir, but I shall probe your constitution. In short, the price of your banishment is to be paid with the person of——

Mel. Of *Cynthia*, and her fortune—Why you forget you told me this before.

Mask. No, no—So far you are right; and I am, as an earnest of that bargain, to have full and free possession of the person of——your aunt.

Mel. Ha!——Pho, you trifle.

Mask. By this light, I'm serious; all raillery apart—I knew 'twould stun you: this evening at eight she will receive me in her bed-chamber.

Mel. Hell and the devil, is she abandon'd of all grace—Why the woman is possess'd——

Mask. Well, will you go in my stead?

Mel. 'By Heav'n' into a hot furnace sooner.

Mask. No, you would not—It would not be so convenient, as I can order matters.

Mel. What d'ye mean!

Mask. Mean? Not to disappoint the lady I assure you—Ha, ha, ha! how gravely he looks—Come, come, I won't perplex you. 'Tis the only thing that fortune could have contriv'd to make me capable of serving you, either to my inclination or your own necessity.

Mel. How, how, for Heav'n's sake, dear *Maskwell*?

Mask. Why thus—I'll go according to appointment; you shall have notice at the critical minute to come and surprize your aunt and me together: counterfeit a rage against me, and I'll make my escape through the private passage from her chamber, which I'll take care to leave open: 'Twill be hard, if then you can't bring her to any conditions. For this discovery will disarm her of all defence, and leave her entirely at your mercy: nay, she must ever after be in awe of you.

Mel. Let me adore thee, my better *genius*! by Heav'n I think it is not in the power of fate to disappoint my hopes—My hopes, my certainty!

Mask. Well, I'll meet you here, within a quarter of eight, and give you notice. [Exit.]

Mel. Good fortune ever go along with thee!

Enter Careless.

Care. *Mellefont*, get out o' th' way, my lady *Plyant's* coming, and I shall never succeed while thou art in sight—Tho' she begins to tack about; but I made love a great while to no purpose.

Mel. Why, what's the matter? She's convinc'd that I don't care for her.

Care. I can't get an answer from her, that does not begin with her honour, or her virtue, 'her religion,' or some such cant. Then she has told me the whole history of Sir *Paul's* nine years courtship; how he has lain for whole nights together upon the stairs, before her chamber-door; and that the first favour he received from her, was a piece of an old scarlet petticoat for a stomacher; which since the day of his marriage, he has, out of a piece of gallantry, converted into a night-cap, and wears it still with much solemnity on his anniversary wedding-night.

Mel. That I have seen, with the ceremony thereunto belonging—For on that night he creeps in at the bed's feet like a gull'd *Bassa* that has marry'd a relation of the *Grand Signior*, and that night he has his arms at liberty. Did not she tell you at what a distance she keeps him? He has confess'd to me that but at some certain times, that is I suppose when she apprehends being with child, he never has the privilege of using the familiarity of a husband with a wife. He was once given to scrambling with his hands, and sprawling in his sleep; and ever since she has him swaddled up in blankets, and his hands and feet swath'd down, and so put to bed; and there he lies with a great beard, like a *Russian* bear upon a drift of snow. You are very great with him, I wonder he never told you his grievances, he will I warrant you.

Care. Excessively foolish!—But that which gives me most hopes of her, is her telling me of the many temptations she has resisted.

Mel. Nay, then you have her; for a woman's bragging to a man that she has overcome temptations, is an argument that they were weakly offer'd, and a challenge

to him to engage her more irresistibly. 'Tis only an enhancing the price of the commodity, by telling you how many customers have underbid her.

Care. Nay, I don't despair—But still she has a grudging to you—I talk'd to her t'other night at my lord *Froth's* masquerade, when I'm satisfy'd she knew me, and I had no reason to complain of my reception; but I find women are not the same bare-faced and in masks,—and a vizard disguises their inclinations as much as their faces.

Mel. 'Tis a mistake, for women may most properly be said to be unmask'd when they wear vizards; for that secures them from blushing, and being out of countenance, and next to being in the dark, or alone, they are most truly themselves in a vizard mask.' Here they come, I'll leave you. Ply her close, and by and by clap a *billet-doux* into her hand: for a woman never thinks a man truly in love with her, 'till he has been fool enough to think of her out of her sight, and to lose so much time as to write to her. [Exit.

Enter Sir Paul and Lady Plyant.

Sir Paul. Shan't we disturb your meditation, Mr. *Careless*. You wou'd be private?

Care. You bring that along with you, *Sir Paul*, that shall be always welcome to my privacy.

Sir Paul. O, sweet Sir, you load your humble servants, both me and my wife, with continual favours.

L. P. *Sir Paul*, what a phrase was there? You will be making answers, and taking that upon you, which ought to lie upon me: that you should have so little breeding to think Mr. *Careless* did not apply himself to me. Pray what have you to entertain any bodies privacy? I swear and declare in the face of the world I'm ready to blush for your ignorance.

Sir Paul. I acquiesce, my lady; but don't snub so loud.

[*Aside to her.*

L. P. Mr. *Careless*, if a person that is wholly illiterate might be supposed to be capable of being qualify'd to make a suitable return to those obligations which you are pleased to confer upon one that is wholly incapable

of being qualify'd in all those circumstances, I'm sure I shou'd rather attempt it than any thing in the world, [*Courtesies.*] for I'm sure there's nothing in the world that I would rather. [*Courtesies.*] But I know Mr. *Careless* is so great a critick and so fine a gentleman, that it is impossible for me.——

Care. O Heav'ns! Madam, you confound me.

Sir *Paul*. Gads-bud, she's a fine person——

L. *P.* O lord! Sir, pardon me, we women have not those advantages: I know my own imperfections—But at the same time you must give me leave to declare in the face of the world, that no body is more sensible of favours and things; for with the reserve of my honour, I assure you, Mr. *Careless*, I don't know any thing in the world I would refuse to a person so meritorious—— You'll pardon my want of expression.——

Care. O your ladyship is abounding in all excellence, particularly that of phrase.

L. *P.* You are so obliging, sir.

Care. Your ladyship is so charming.

Sir *Paul*. So, now, now; now, my lady.

L. *P.* So well bred.

Care. So surprizing.

L. *P.* So well drest, so *bonne mine*, so eloquent, so unaffected, so easy, so free, so particular, so agreeable——

Sir *Paul*. Ay, so, so, there.

Care. O lord, I beseech you, madam, don't——

L. *P.* So gay, so graceful, so good teeth, so fine shape, so fine limbs, so fine linen, and I don't doubt but you have a very good skin, sir.

Care. For Heav'n's sake, madam—— I'm quite out of countenance.

Sir *Paul*. And my lady's quite out of breath; or else you should hear—Gad's-bub, you may talk of my lady *Froth*.

Care. O fy, fy, not to be named of a day—My lady *Froth* is very well in her accomplishments—But it is when my Lady *Plyant* is not thought of——If that can ever be.

L. *P.* O you overcome me—That is so excessive..

Sir Paul. Nay, I swear and vow that was pretty.

Care. O *Sir Paul*, you are the happiest man alive. Such a lady! that is the envy of her own sex, and the admiration of ours.

Sir Paul. Your humble servant, I am, I thank Heav'n, in a fine way of living, as I may say, peacefully and happily, and I think need not envy any of my neighbours, blessed be Providence—Ay, truly, *Mr. Careless*, my lady is a great blessing, a fine, discreet, well-spoken woman as you shall see—If it becomes me to say so; and we live very comfortably together; she is a little hasty sometimes, and so am I; but mine's soon over, and then I'm so sorry—O *Mr. Careless*, if it were not for one thing—

Enter Boy with a letter, and offers it to Sir Paul.

L. P. How often have you been told of that, you jack-anapes?

Sir Paul. Gad so, gad's-bud—*Tim.* carry it to my lady, you should have carry'd it to my lady first.

Boy. 'Tis directed to your worship.

Sir Paul. Well, well, my lady reads all letters first.—Child, do so no more; d'ye hear, *Tim.*

Boy. No, and please you.

[*Exit.*

Sir Paul. A humour of my wife's, you know women have little fancies—But as I was telling you, *Mr. Careless*, if it were not for one thing, I should think myself the happiest man in the world; indeed that touches me near, very near.

Care. What can that be, *Sir Paul*?

Sir Paul. Why, I have, I thank Heav'n, a very plentiful fortune, a good estate in the country, some houses in town, and some money, a pretty tolerable personal estate; and it is a great grief to me, indeed it is, *Mr. Careless* that I have not a son to inherit this.—'Tis true, I have a daughter, and a fine dutiful child she is, though I say it, blessed be Providence I may say; for indeed, *Mr. Careless*, I am mightily beholden to Providence—A poor unworthy sinner—But if I had a son, ah, that's my affliction, and my only affliction; indeed I cannot refrain tears when it comes in my mind.

[*Cries.*

Care.

Care. why, methinks that might be easily remedied—my lady's a fine likely woman——

Sir Paul. Oh, a fine likely woman as you shall see in a summer's day—Indeed she is, *Mr. Careless*, in all respects.

Care. And I should not have taken you to have been so old——

Sir Paul. Alas, that's not it, *Mr. Careless*; ah! that's not it; no, no, you shoot wide of the mark a mile; indeed you do, that's not it, *Mr. Careless*; no, no, that's not it.

Care. No, what can be the matter then?

Sir Paul. You'll scarcely believe me, when I shall tell you—my lady is so nice—It's very strange, but it's true: too true—she's so very nice, that I don't believe she would touch a man for the world—At least not above once a year; I'm sure I have found it so; and alas, what's once a year to an old man, who would do good in his generation? Indeed it's true, *Mr. Careless*, it breaks my heart—I am her husband, as I may say; though far unworthy of that honour, yet I am her husband; but alas-a-day, I have no more familiarity with her person—as to that matter——than with my own mother—no indeed.

Care. Alas-a-day, this is a lamentable story; my lady must be told on't; she must i'faith, *Sir Paul*; 'tis an injury to the world.

Sir Paul. Ah! would to Heav'n you would, *Mr. Careless*; you are mightily in her favour.

Care. I warrant you, what we must have a son some way or other.

Sir Paul. Indeed, I should be mightily bound to you, if you could bring it about, *Mr. Careless*.

L. P. Here, *Sir Paul*, it's from your Steward, here's a return of 600 pounds; you may take fifty of it for the next half year.

[Gives him the letter.

Enter Lord Froth, and Cynthia.

Sir Paul. how does my girl? come hither to thy father, poor lamb, thou'rt melancholick,

Ld. Froth. Heav'n, *Sir Paul*, you amaze me of all things in the world—you are never pleas'd but when we are

are all upon the broad grin ; all laugh and no company ; ah, then 'tis such a sight to see some teeth—sure you're a great admirer of my lady *Whifler*, Mr. *Sneer*, and Sir *Laurence Loud*, and that gang.

Sir Paul. I vow and swear she's a very merry woman, but I think she laughs a little too much.

Ld. Froth. Merry ! O Lord, what a character that is of a woman of quality—you have been at my lady *Whifler*'s upon her day, madam ;

Cynt. Yes, my Lord—I must humour this fool. [*Aside*.]

Ld. Froth. Well and how ? hee ! what is your sense of the conversation ?

Cynt. O most ridiculous, a perpetual consort of laughing without any harmony ; for sure, my Lord, to laugh out of time, is as disagreeable as to sing out of time or out of tune.

Ld. Froth. Hee, hee, hee, right ! and then, my lady *Whifler* is so ready—she always comes in three bars too soon—and then, what do they laugh at ? for you know laughing without a jest is as impertinent ; hee ! as, as—

Cynt. As dancing without a fiddle.

Ld. Froth. Just i'faith, that was at my tongue's end.

Cynt. But that cannot be properly said of them, for I think they are all in good nature with the world, and only laugh at one another, and you must allow they have all jests in their persons, though they have none in their conversation.

Ld. Froth. True, as I'm a person of honour—for Heav'n's sake let us sacrifice 'em to mirth a little.

Enter Boy and whispers Sir Paul.

Sir Paul. Gads io—wife, wife, my lady *Plyant*, I have a word.

L. P. I'm busy, *Sir Paul*, I wonder at your impertinence——

Care. *Sir Paul*, harkee, I'm reasoning the matter you know ; madam,—if your ladyship please, we'll discourse of this in the next room.

[*Exeunt Careless and Lady Plyant*.]

Sir Paul. O ho, I wish you good success, I wish you good success. Boy, tell my lady, when she has done, I would speak with her below.

[*Exit*.]

Enter

Enter Lady Froth and Brisk.

L. Froth. Then you think that *episode* between Susan, the dairy-maid, and our coach-man is not amiss; you know, I may suppose the dairy in town, as well as in the country.

Brisk. Incomparable, let me perish—but then being an heroick poem, had not you better call him a *Charioteer*? *Charioteer* sounds great; besides your ladyship's coachman having a red face, and you comparing him to the sun—and you know the sun is call'd *Heav'n's Charioteer*.

L. Froth. Oh, infinitely better; I'm extremely beholden to you for the hint; stay, we'll read over those half a score lines again. [*Pulls out a paper.*] Let me see here, you know what goes before—the comparison, you know. [*Reads*]

*For as the sun shines ev'ry day,
So of our coachman I may say.*

Brisk. I'm afraid that simile won't do in wet weather——because you say the sun shines ev'ry day.

L. Froth. No, for the sun it won't, but it will do for the coach-man, for you know their's most occasion for a coach in wet weather.

Brisk. Right, right, that saves all.

L. Froth. Then I don't say the sun shines all the day, but that he peeps now and then, yet he does shine all the day too, you know, tho' we don't see him.

Brisk. Right, but the vulgar will never comprehend that.

L. Froth. Well, you shall hear—let me see.

[*Reads*] *For as the sun shines ev'ry day,*

So, of our coach-man I may say,

He shews his drunken fiery face,

Just as the sun does more or less.

Brisk. That's right, all's well, all's well. *More or less.*

L. Froth [*reads*] *And when at night his labour's done,*

Then too, like Heav'n's Charioteer the sun:

Ay, *Charioteer* does better.

Into the dairy he descends,

And there his whipping and his driving ends;

There

There he's secure from danger of a bilk.

His fare is paid him, and he sets in milk.

For Susan, you know, is *Thetis*, and so——

Brisk. Incomparable well and proper, I'gad——But I have one exception to make——Don't you think *bilk* (I know its good rhyme) but don't you think *bilk* and *fare* too like a hackney coachman?

L. Froth. I swear and vow I'm afraid so——And yet our *Jebu* was a hackney-coachman, when my lord took him.

Brisk. Was he? I'm answer'd, if *Jebu* was a hackney coachman——You may put that in the marginal notes tho', to prevent criticism——Only mark it with a small asterism, and say,——*Jebu* was formerly a hackney coachman.

L. Froth. I will; you'd oblige me extremely to write notes to the whole poem.

Brisk. With all my heart and soul, and proud of the vast honour, let me perish.

Ld. Froth. Hee, hee, hee! my dear have you done——won't you join with us, we were laughing at my lady *Whisper*, and Mr. *Sneer*.

L. Froth.——Ay my dear——Were you? O filthy Mr. *Sneer*; he's a nauseous figure, a most fulsamick fop, foh——He spent two days together in going about *Covent-garden* to suit the lining of his coach with his complexion.

Ld. Froth. O silly! yet his aunt is as fond of him, as if she had brought the ape into the world herself.

Brisk. Who, my Lady *Toothless*; Oh, she's a mortifying spectacle; she's always chewing the cud like an old ewe.

Cynt. Fy, Mr. *Brisk*, *Eringo's* for her cough.

L. Froth. I have seen her take 'em half chew'd out of her mouth, to laugh, and then put 'em in again——Foh.

Ld. Froth. Foh.

L. Froth. Then she's always ready to laugh when *Sneer* offers to speak——And sits in expectation of his no jest, with her gums bare, and her mouth open——

Brisk. Like an oyster at low ebb, I'gad——Ha, ha, ha!

Cynt. [*Aside.*] Well, I find there are no fools so inconsiderable

siderable in themselves, but they can render other people contemptible by exposing their infirmities.

L. *Froth*. Then that t'other great strapping lady—I can't hit of her name; the old fat fool that paints so exorbitantly.

Brisk. I know whom you mean——But deuce take me I can't hit of her name neither—Paints, d'ye say? Why she lays it on with a trowel——Then she has a great beard that bristles through it, and makes her look as if she were plaister'd with lime and hair, let me perish.

L. *Froth*. Oh you made a song upon her, Mr. Brisk.

Brisk. He? egad, so I did——My Lord can sing it.

Cynt. O good my Lord let's hear it.

Brisk. 'Tis not a song neither—Its a sort of an epigram, or rather an epigrammatick sonnet; I don't know what to call it, but it's satire.——Sing it, my Lord.

Lord Froth sings.

' Ancient Phillis has young graces,

' 'Tis a strange thing but a true one;

' Shall I tell you how?

' She herself makes her own faces,

' And each morning wears a new one;

' Where's the wonder now?

Brisk. Short, but there's salt in't; my way of writing, I gad.'

Enter Footman.

L. *Froth*. How now?

Foot. Your ladyship's chair is come.

L. *Froth*. Is nurse and the child in it?

Foot. Yes, madam.

L. *Froth*. O the dear creature! let's go see it.

Ld. *Froth*. I swear, my dear, you'll spoil that child, with sending it to and again so often, this is the seventh time the chair has gone for her to day.

L. *Froth*. O-law, I swear its but the sixth—and I han't seen her these two hours——The poor dear creature——I swear, my lord, you don't love poor little *Sapho*, ——Come, my dear *Cynthia*, Mr. Brisk, we'll go see *Sapho*, tho' my Lord won't.

Cynt..

Cynt. I'll wait upon your ladyship.

Brisk. Pray, madam, how old is Lady Sapho?

L. Froth. Three quarters, but I swear she has a world of wit, and can sing a tune already. My Lord, won't you go? Won't you? What not to see Saph? Pray, my Lord, come see little Saph. I knew you cou'd not stay.

[Exit. Ld. Froth, L. Froth and Brisk.]

Cynt. 'Tis not so hard to counterfeit joy in the depth of affliction, as to dissemble mirth in company of fools — Why should I call 'em fools? The world thinks better of 'em; for these have quality and education, wit and fine conversation, are receiv'd and admir'd by the world — If not, they like and admire themselves — And why is not that true wisdom, for 'tis happiness: And for ought I know, we have misapply'd the name all this while, and mistaken the thing: Since

'If happiness in self-content is plac'd,

'The wise are wretched, and fools only blest'd.' [Exit.]

A C T IV.

Enter Mellefont and Cynthia.

Cynt. I Heard him loud as I came by the closet door and my lady with him, but she seem'd to moderate his passion.

Mel. Ay, 'hell thank her,' as gentle breezes moderate a fire; but I shall counter-work her spells, 'and ride the witch in her own bridle.'

Cynt. It's impossible; she'll cast beyond you still — I'll lay my life it will never be a match.

Mel. What?

Cynt. Between you and me.

Mel. Why so?

Cynt. My mind gives me it won't — because we are both willing; we each of us strive to reach the goal, and

‘ and hinder one another in the race ; I swear it never does
 ‘ well when the parties are so agreed—For when people
 ‘ walk hand in hand, there’s neither overtaking nor meet-
 ‘ ing: we hunt in couples where we both pursue the
 ‘ same game, but forget one another; and ’tis because
 ‘ we are so near that we don’t think of coming together.

‘ *Mel.* Hum, ’gad I believe there’s something in’t;—
 ‘ marriage is the game that we hunt, and while we think
 ‘ that we only have it in view, I don’t see but we have it
 ‘ in our power.

‘ *Cynt.* Within reach; for example, give me your hand;
 ‘ you have look’d thro’ the wrong end of the perspec-
 ‘ tive all this while; for nothing has been between us
 ‘ but our fears,’

Mel. I don’t know why we should not steal out of the
 house this very moment and marry one another, with-
 out consideration or the fear of repentance. Plague
 o’ fortune, portion, settlements and jointures.

Cynt. Ay, ay, what have we to do with ’em; you
 know we marry for love.

Mel. Love, love, down-right very villainous love.

Cynt. ‘ And he that can’t live upon love, deserves to
 ‘ die in a ditch.’—Here then, I give you my promise, in-
 spite of duty, any temptation of wealth, your incon-
 stancy, or my own inclination to change——

Mel. To run most wilfully and unreasonably away
 with me this moment, and be married.

Cynt. Hold——Never to marry any body else.

Mel. That’s but a kind of negative consent——Why,
 you won’t balk the frolick?

Cynt. If you had not been so assured of your own con-
 duct I would not——But ’tis but reasonable that since I
 consent to like a man without the vile consideration of
 money, he should give a very evident demonstration of
 his wit: therefore let me see you undermine my
 Lady Touchwood, as you boasted, and force her to give
 her consent, and then——

Mel. I’ll do’t.

Cynt. And I’ll do’t.

Mel. This very next ensuing hour of eight a clock, is
 the

the last minute of her reign, unless the devil assist her in *propria persona*.

Cynt. Well, if the devil should assist her, and your plot miscarry.—

Mel. Ay, what am I to trust to then?

Cynt. Why if you give me very clear demonstration that it was the devil, I'll allow for irresistible odds. But if I find it to be only chance, or destiny, or unlucky stars, or any thing but the very devil, I'm inexorable: only still I'll keep my word; and live unmarried for your sake.

Mel. And you won't die one, for your own, so still there's hope.

Cynt. Here's my mother-in-law, and your friend *Careless*, I would not have 'em see us together yet. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Careless and Lady Plyant.

L. P. I swear, Mr. *Careless*, you are very alluring—And say so many fine things, and nothing is so moving to me as a fine thing. Well, I must do you this justice, and declare in the face of the world, never any body gain'd so far upon me as yourself; with blushes I must own it, you have shaken, as I may say, the very foundation of my honour—Well, sure if I escape your importunities, I shall value myself as long as I live, I swear.

Care. And despise me. [*Sighing.*

L. P. The last of any man in the world, by my purity; now you make me swear—O gratitude forbid, that I should ever be wanting in a respectful acknowledgment of an intire resignation of all my best wishes, for the person and parts of so accomplish'd and so fine a gentleman, whose merit challenges much more, I'm sure, than my illiterate praises can, description—

Care [*In a whining tone.*] Ah Heav'ns, madam, you ruin me with kindness; your charming tongue pursues the victory of your eyes, while at your feet your poor adorer dies.

L. P. Ah! very fine.

Care. [*Still whining.*] Ah why are you so fair, so bewitching fair? O let me grow to the ground here, and feast

feast upon that hand; O let me press it to my heart, my trembling heart, the nimble movement shall instruct your pulse, and teach it to alarm desire.

[*'Zoons' I'm almost at the end of my cant, if she does not yield quickly.* [Aside

L. P. O that's so passionate and fine, I cannot hear it—I am not safe if I stay, and must leave you.

Care. And must you leave me! rather let me languish out a wretched life, and breathe my soul beneath your feet. [*I must say the same thing over again, and can't help it.* [Aside.

L. P. I swear I'm ready to languish too—O my honour! whither is it going? I protest you have given me the palpitation of the heart.

Care. Can you be so cruel.—

L. P. O rise I beseech you, say no more 'till you rise—Why did you kneel so long? I swear I was so transported, I did not see it,—Well, to shew you how far you have gain'd upon me; I assure you if Sir Paul should die, of all mankind there's none I'd sooner make my second choice.

Care. O Heav'n! I can't out-live this night without your favour—I feel my spirits faint, a general dampness over-spreads my face, a cold deadly dew already vents through all my pores, and will to-morrow wash me for ever from your sight, and drown me in my tomb.

L. P. O you have conquer'd, sweet, melting, [moving] fir, you have conquer'd—What heart of marble can refrain to weep, and yield to such sad sayings.—[Cries.

Care. I thank Heav'n, they are the saddest that I ever said—Oh! [*I shall never contain laughter.* [Aside.

L. P. Oh, I yield myself all up to your uncontrollable embraces—Say, thou dear dying man, when, where, and how.—Ah, there's Sir Paul.

Care. 'Slife, yonder's Sir Paul, but if he were not come, I'm so transported I cannot speak—This note will inform you.

[Gives her a note.

[Exit.

Enter Sir Paul, Plyant and Cynthia.

Sir Paul. Thou art my tender lambkin, and shalt do what thou wilt—But endeavour to forget this Mellefont.

Cynt.

Cynt. I would obey you to my power, sir; but if I have not him, I have sworn never to marry.

Sir Paul. Never to marry! Heav'n's forbid: must I neither have sons nor grandsons? Must the family of the *Plyants* be utterly extinct for want of issue male. Oh impiety! but did you swear, did that sweet creature swear! ha? How durst you swear without my consent, ah? gads-bud, who am I?

Cynt. Pray don't be angry, sir, when I swore, I had your consent; and therefore I swore.

Sir Paul. Why then the revoking my consent does annul, or make of none effect your oath: So you may unswear it again——The law will allow it.

Cynt. Ay, but my conscience never will.

Sir Paul. Gads-bud no matter for that, conscience and law never go together; you must not expect that.

L. P. Ay, but *Sir Paul*, I conceive if she has sworn, d'ye mark me, if she has once sworn, it is most unchristian, inhuman, and obscene that she shou'd break it.—I'll make up the match again, because *Mr. Careless* said it would oblige him. [*Aside.*

Sir Paul. Does your ladyship conceive so——Why I was of that opinion once too——Nay if your ladyship conceives so, I'm of that opinion again; but I can neither find my lord nor my lady to know what they intend.

L. P. I'm satisfy'd that my cousin *Mellefont* has been much wrong'd.

Cynt. [*Aside.*] I'm amaz'd to find her of our side, for I'm sure she lov'd him.

L. P. I know my Lady *Touchwood* has no kindness for him; and besides I have been inform'd by *Mr. Careless*, that *Mellefont* had never any thing more than a profound respect——That he has own'd himself to be my admirer 'tis true, but he was never so presumptuous to entertain any dishonourable notions of things; so that if this be made plain——I don't see how my daughter can in conscience, or honour, or any thing in the world——

Sir Paul. Indeed if this be made plain, as my lady your mother says, child——

L. P.

L. P. Plain! I was inform'd of it by Mr. *Careless*—And I assure you Mr. *Careless* is a person—that has a most extraordinary respect and honour for you, Sir *Paul*.

Cynt. [*Aside.*] And for your ladyship too, I believe, or else you had not chang'd sides so soon; now I begin to find it.

Sir *Paul*. I am much obliged to Mr. *Careless* really, he is a person that I have a great value for, not only for that, but because he has a great veneration for your ladyship.

L. P. O las, no indeed, Sir *Paul*, 'tis upon your account.

Sir *Paul*. No I protest and vow, I have no title to his esteem, but in having the honour to appertain in some measure to your ladyship, that's all.

L. P. O law now, I swear and declare, it shan't be so, you're too modest, Sir *Paul*.

Sir *Paul*. It becomes me, when there is any comparison made, between your ladyship and your most obedient obsequious, devoted, and unamour'd adorer Sir *Paul Plyant*.

L. P. O fy, fy, Sir *Paul*, you'll put me out of countenance—Your very obedient and affectionate wife; that's all—And highly honour'd in that title.

Sir *Paul*. Gads-bud I am transported! Give me leave to kiss your ladyship's hand.

Cynt. That my poor father should be so very silly!
[*Aside.*]

L. P. My lip indeed, Sir *Paul*, I swear you shall.
[*He kisses her, and bows very low.*]

Sir *Paul*. I humbly thank your ladyship—I don't know whether I fly on ground, or walk in air—Gads-bud, she was never thus before—Well, I must own myself the most beholden to Mr. *Careless*—As sure as can be this is all his doing,—something that he has said; well, 'tis a rare thing to have an ingenious friend. Well, your ladyship is of opinion that the match may go forward.

L. P. By all means—Mr. *Careless* has satisfy'd me of the matter.

Sir *Paul*. Well, why then, lamb, you may keep your oath

oath, but have a care of making rash vows ; come hither to me, and kiss *Papa*.

L. P. I swear and declare, I am in such a twitter to read Mr. *Careless* his letter, that I can't forbear any longer—But tho' I may read all letters first by prerogative, yet I'll be sure to be unsuspected this time.—Sir *Paul*.

Sir *Paul*. Did your ladyship call?

L. P. Nay, not to interrupt you, my dear——Only lend me your letter, which you had from your steward to day : I would look upon the account again ; and may be increase your allowance.

Sir *Paul*. There it is, madam ; do you want a pen and ink?

[*Bows and gives the letter.*]

L. P. No, no, nothing else, I thank you, Sir *Paul*—So now I can read my own letter under the cover of his.

[*Aside.*]

Sir *Paul*. He ? And wilt thou bring a grandson at nine months end——He ? A brave chopping boy.——I'll settle a thousand pound a year upon the rogue as soon as ever he looks me in the face, I will, gads-bud. “ *I hope the young cherub will be like me ; I wou'd fain have some resemblance of myself in my posterity—ha—Thy—Shou'dn't you wish he was like his Grand Papa.* ” ‘ I'm overjoy'd to think I have any of my family that will bring children into the world. For I would fain have some resemblance of myself in my posterity, he *Thy* ? Can't you contrive that affair, girl ? Do gads-bud, think on thy old father ; heh ? Make the young rogue as like as you can.’

Cynt. I'm glad to see you so merry, sir.

Sir *Paul*. Merry, gads-bud I'm serious, I'll give thee 500 *l.* for every feature of him that resembles me ; ah, this eye, this left eye ! a thousand pound for this left eye. This has done execution in its time, girl ; why thou hast my leer, hussy, just thy father's leer.——Let it be transmitted to the young rogue by the help of imagination ; why 'tis the mark of our family *Thy* ; our house is distinguish'd by a languishing eye, as the house of *Austria* is by a thick lip.——Ah ! when I was of your age, hussy, I would have held fifty to one, I could have drawn my

my own picture——Gads-bud, I could have done——
 ‘not so much as you neither,——but——nay, don’t
 blush——

Cym. I don’t blush, sir, for I vow I don’t understand——

Sir Paul. Pshaw, pshaw, you fib, you baggage, you do
 ‘understand, and you shall understand; come don’t be so
 ‘nice, gads-bud, don’t learn after your mother-in-law my
 ‘lady here: Marry Heav’n forbid that you should fol-
 ‘low her example, that would spoil all indeed. Bless us,
 ‘if you should take a vagary and make a rash resolution
 ‘on your wedding night, to die a maid, as she did; all
 ‘were ruin’d, all my hopes lost——My heart would
 ‘break, and my estate would be left to the wide world,
 ‘he? I hope you are a better christian than to think of
 ‘living a nun; he? Answer me?

Cym. I’m all obedience, sir, to your commands.’

L. P. [*Having read the letter.*] O dear Mr. Careless,
 I swear he writes charmingly, and he looks charmingly,
 and he has charm’d me, as much as I have charm’d him;
 and so I’ll tell him in the wardrobe when ’tis dark. O
 crimine! I hope Sir Paul has not seen both letters.
 [*Puts the wrong letter hastily up, and gives him her own.*]
Sir Paul, here’s your letter, to morrow morning I’ll
 settle accounts to your advantage.

Sir Paul. I humbly thank your ladyship.

L. P. So now I’ll retire and study a complimentary re-
 ‘buke to Mr. Careless for the pathetic tender of his re-
 ‘gards, but it shall not be too severe neither.” [Exit.

Enter Brisk.

Brisk. Sir Paul, Gads-bud you’re an uncivil person, let
 me tell you, and all that; and I did not think it had been
 in you.

Sir Paul. O law, what’s the matter now? I hope you
 are not angry Mr. Brisk.

Brisk. Deuce take me I believe you intend to marry
 your daughter yourself; you’re always brooding over her
 like an old hen, as if she were not well hatch’d, I gad,
 he?

Sir Paul. Good strange! Mr. Brisk is such a merry fa-
 cetious person, he, he, he! No, no, I have done with
 her, I have done with her now.

Brisk.

THE DOUBLE DEALER. 51

Brisk. The fiddles have stay'd this hour in the hall, and my Lord *Froth* wants a partner; we can never begin without her.

Sir Paul. Go, go, child, go, get you gone and dance and be merry, I'll come and look at you by and by.—Where's my son *Mellefont*?

L. P. I'll send him to them, I know where he is.—

Brisk. *Sir Paul*, will you send *Careless* into the hall if you meet him.

Sir Paul. I will, I will, I'll go and look for him on purpose. *[Exeunt Sir Paul, and Cynthia.]*

Brisk. So now they are all gone, and I have an opportunity to practise.—Ah! My dear Lady *Froth*! She's a most engaging creature; if she were not so fond of that 'damn'd' coxcomby lord of hers; and yet I am forced to allow him wit too, to keep in with him—No matter, she's a woman of parts, and I'gad parts will carry her. She said she would follow me into the gallery—Now to make my approaches—Hem! hem! Ah madam!—*[Bows.]* Plague on't, why should I disparage my parts by thinking what to say? None but dull rogues *think*; witty men, like rich fellows, are always ready for all expences; while your blockheads, like poor needy scoundrels, are forced to examine their stock, and forecast the charges of the day. Here she comes, I'll seem not to see her, and try to win her with a new airy invention of my own, hem!

Enter Lady Froth.

[Brisk sings, walking about] I'm sick with love, ha, ha, ha! pr'ythee come cure me.

I'm sick with, &c.

O ye Pow'rs! O my Lady *Froth*, my Lady *Froth*! My Lady *Froth*! Heigho! Break heart; gods I thank you.

[Stands musing with his arms a-cross.]

L. Froth. O Heav'ns, Mr. *Brisk*! What's the matter?

Brisk. My Lady *Froth*! Your ladyship's most humble servant;—The matter, madam? Nothing, madam, nothing at all I'gad. I was fallen into the most agreeable amusement in the whole province of contemplation: that's all—(I'll seem to conceal my passion, and that will look like respect.)

[Aside.]

L. Froth. Bless me, why did you call out upon me so loud?——

Brisk. O Lord I madam? I beseech your ladyship——when?

L. Froth. Just now as I came in, bless me, why don't you know it?

Brisk. Not I, let me perish——But did I! Strange! I confess your ladyship was in my thoughts; and I was in a sort of dream that did in a manner represent a very pleasing object to my imagination, but——but did I indeed?——To see how love and murder will out. But did I really name my Lady *Froth*?

L. Froth. Three times aloud, as I love letters——But did you talk of love? O *Parnassus*! Who would have thought Mr. *Brisk* could have been in love, ha, ha, ha! O Heav'ns! I thought you cou'd have no mistress but the Nine Muses.

Brisk. No more I have I'gad, for I adore 'em all in your ladyship——Let me perish, I don't know whether to be splenetick, or airy upon't; the deuce take me if I can tell whether I am glad or sorry that your ladyship has made the discovery.

L. Froth. O be merry by all means——Prince *Volscius* in love! Ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. O barbarous, to turn me into ridicule! Yet, ha, ha, ha! The deuce take me, I can't help laughing my self, ha, ha, ha! yet 'by Heav'ns' I have a violent passion for your ladyship, seriously.

L. Froth. Seriously? ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Seriously, ha, ha, ha! Gad I have, for all I laugh.

L. Froth. Ha, ha, ha! What d'ye think I laugh at? Ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Me I'gad, ha, ha!

Ld. Froth. No, the deuce take me if I don't laugh at my self; for hang me if I have not a violent passion for Mr. *Brisk*, ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. Seriously?

L. Froth. Seriously, ha, ha, ha!

Brisk. That's well enough; let me perish, ha, ha, ha! O miraculous, what a happy discovery! Ay my dear charming Lady *Froth*!

L. Froth.

L. Froth. Oh my adored Mr. Brisk! [Embrace.

Enter Lord Froth.

Ld. Froth. The company are all ready—How now!

Brisk. Zoons, madam, there's my lord [Softly to her.

L. Froth. Take no notice—but observe me—

Now cast off, and meet me at the lower end of the room, and then join hands again; I could teach my lord this dance purely, but I vow, Mr. Brisk, I can't tell how to come so near any other man. Oh here's my lord, now you shall see me do it with him.

[They pretend to practise part of a country dance.

Ld. Froth.—Oh I see there's no harm yet—But I don't like this familiarity. [Aside.

L. Froth.—Shall you and I do our close dance, to shew Mr. Brisk?

Ld. Froth. No, my dear, do it with him

L. Froth. I'll do it with him, my lord, when you are out of the way.

Brisk. That's good I'gad, that's good, duce take me I can hardly hold laughing in his face. [Aside.

Ld. Froth. Any other time, my dear, or we'll dance it below.

L. Froth. With all my heart.

Brisk. Come my lord, I'll wait on you—My charming witty angel! [To her.

L. Froth. We shall have whispering time enough, you know, since we are partners. [Exeunt.

Enter Lady Plyant, and Careless

L. P. O Mr. Careless, Mr. Careless, I'm ruin'd, I'm undone!

Care. What's the matter, madam?

L. P. O the unlucky'st accident, I'm afraid I shan't live to tell it you!

Care. Heav'n forbid! What is it?

L. P. I'm in such a fright; the strangest quandary and premunire! I'm all over in an universal agitation, I dare swear every circumstance of me trembles.—O your letter, your letter! By an unfortunate mistake, I have given Sir Paul your letter instead of his own.

Care. That was unlucky.

L. P. O yonder he comes reading of it, for Heav'n's take step in here and advise me quickly, before he sees.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Paul with the letter.

Sir Paul.—O Providence, what a conspiracy have I discover'd—But let me see to make an end on't.—[*Reads.*] Hum—*After supper in the wardrobe by the gallery.* If Sir Paul should surprize us, I have a commission from him to treat with you about the very matter of fact—Matter of fact! Very pretty; it seems then I am conducing to my own cuckoldom; why this is the very traiterous position of taking up arms by my authority, against my person! Well, let me see—'Till then I languish in expectation of my adored charmer.

Dying Ned. Careless,

Gads-bud, would that were matter of fact too. Thou Judas Maccabeus, and Iscariot both. O friendship! What art thou but a name? Henceforth let no man that is married take a friend into the bosom of his family! for if he does—O we know what will follow from the example of Sir Paul Plyant, and his bosom friend Ned Careless. O my lady, have I for this been pinion'd night after night for three years past? Have I been swath'd in blankets 'till I have been even depriv'd of motion? Have I approach'd the marriage bed with reverence as to a sacred shrine, and deny'd myself the enjoyment of lawful and domestick pleasures to preserve its purity, and must I now find it polluted by foreign iniquity? O my lady Plyant, you were chaste as ice, but you are melted now, and false as water,—But Providence has been constant to me in discovering this conspiracy: still I am beholden to Providence, if it were not for Providence, sure, poor Sir Paul, thy heart would break.

Enter Lady Plyant.

L. P. So, sir, I see you have read the letter—Well now, Sir Paul, what do you think of your friend Careless? Has he been treacherous, or did you give his insolence a licence to make trial of your wife's suspected virtue? D'ye see here? [*Snatches the letter as in anger.*]

Look,

Look, read it? Gad's my life if I thought it were so, I would this moment renounce all communication with you. Ungrateful monster! He? Is it so? Ay, I see it, a plot upon my honour, your guilty cheeks confess it: Oh where shall wrong'd virtue fly for reparation! I'll be divorced this instant.

Sir Paul. Gads-bud what shall I say? This is the strangest surprize! Why I don't know any thing at all, nor I don't know whether there be any thing at all in the world, or no.

L. P. I thought I should try you, false man. I that never dissembled in my life: yet to make trial of you, pretended to like that monster of iniquity, *Careless*, and found out that contrivance to let you see this letter; which now I find was of your own inditing——I do, heathen, I do, see my face no more; I'll be divorced presently.

Sir Paul. O strange, what will become of me!—I'm so amaz'd, and so overjoy'd, so afraid, and so sorry.——But did you give me this letter on purpose, he? Did you?

L. P. Did I? Do you doubt me, Turk, Saracen? I have a cousin that's a proctor in the commons, I'll go to him instantly.——

Sir Paul. Hold, stay, I beseech your ladyship——I'm so overjoy'd, stay, I'll confess all.

L. P. What will you confess, Jew?

Sir Paul. Why now as I hope to be saved, I had no hand in this letter——Nay hear me, I beseech your ladyship; the devil take me now if he did not go beyond my commission——If I desired him to do any more than speak a good word only just for me; gads-bud only for poor *Sir Paul*, I'm an Anabaptist, or a Jew, or what you please to call me.

L. P. Why is not here matter of fact?

Sir Paul. Ay, but by your own virtue and continency that matter of fact is all his own doing—I confess I had a great desire to have some honours conferr'd upon me, which lie all in your ladyship's breast, and he being a well-spoken man, I desired him to intercede for me.——

L. P. Did you so, presumption! Oh! he comes, the *Tarquin* comes; I cannot bear his sight. [Exit.

Enter Careless.

Care. Sir Paul, I'm glad I've met with you, 'gad I have said all I could, but can't prevail—Then my friendship to you has carry'd me a little farther in this matter——

Sir Paul. Indeed—Well sir—I'll dissemble with him a little. [Aside.

Care. Why faith I have in my time known honest gentlemen abused by a pretended coyness in their wives, and I had a mind to try my lady's virtue—And when I could not prevail for you, 'gad I pretended to be in love myself—but all in vain, she would not hear a word upon that subject: then I writ a letter to her; I don't know what effects that will have, but I'll be sure to tell you when I do, tho' by this light I believe her virtue is impregnable.

Sir Paul. O Providence! Providence! What discoveries are here made? Why, this is better and more miraculous than the rest.

Care. What do you mean?

Sir Paul. I can't tell you, I'm so overjoy'd; come along with me to my lady, I can't contain myself; come my dear friend.

Care. So, so, so, this difficulty's over. [Aside.
[Exeunt.

Enter Mellefont and Maskwell, from different doors.

Mel. Maskwell! I have been looking for you—'tis within a quarter of eight.

Mask. My lady is just gone into my lord's closet, you had best steal into her chamber before she comes, and lie concealed there, otherwise she may lock the door when we are together, and you not easily get in to surprise us.

Mel. He! You say true.

Mask. You had best make haste, for after she has made some apology to the company for her own, and my lord's absence all this while, she'll retire to her chamber instantly.

Mel.

Mel. I go this moment : now fortune I defy thee.

[*Exit.*]

Mask. I confess you may be allow'd to be secure in your own opinion ; the appearance is very fair, but I have an after-game to play that shall turn the tables, and here comes the man that I must manage.

Enter Lord Touchwood.

Ld. T. *Maskewell*, you are the man I wish'd to meet.

Mask. I am happy to be in the way of your lordship's commands.

Ld. T. I have always found you prudent and careful in any thing that has concern'd me or my family.

Mask. I were a villain else—I am bound by duty and gratitude, and my own inclination, to be ever your lordship's servant.

Ld. T. Enough—You are my friend ; I know it : yet there has been a thing in your knowledge, which has concern'd me nearly, that you have conceal'd from me.

Mask. My lord !

Ld. T. Nay, I excuse your friendship to my unnatural nephew thus far—But I know you have been privy to his impious designs upon my wife. This ev'ning she has told me all : her good-nature conceal'd it as long as was possible ; but he perseveres so in villainy, that she has told me even you were weary of dissuading him, ' though you have once actually hindered him from ' forcing her.'

Mask. I am sorry, my lord ; I can't make you an answer ; this is an occasion in which I would not willingly be silent.

Ld. T. I know you would excuse him—And I know as well that you can't.

Mask. Indeed I was in hopes it had been a youthful heat that might have soon boil'd over ; but——

Ld. T. Say on.

Mask. I have nothing more to say, my lord—but to express my concern ; for I think his frenzy increases daily.

Ld. T. How ! Give me but proof of it, ocular proof,

that I may justify my dealing with him to the world, and share my fortunes.

Mask. O my lord! consider that is hard: besides, time may work upon him: then, for me to do it! I have profess'd an everlasting friendship to him.

Ld. T. He is your friend, and what am I?

Mask. I am answered.

Ld. T. Fear not his displeasure; I will put you out of his, and fortune's power, and for that thou art scrupulously honest, I will secure thy fidelity to him, and give my honour never to own any discovery that you shall make me. Can you give me a demonstrative proof? speak.

Mask. I wish I could not——To be plain, my lord, I intended this ev'ning to have try'd all arguments to dissuade him from a design, which I suspect; and if I had not succeeded, to have informed your lordship of what I knew.

Ld. T. I thank you. What is the villain's purpose?

Mask. He has own'd nothing to me of late, and what I mean now, is only a bare suspicion of my own. If your lordship will meet me a quarter of an hour hence there, in that lobby by my lady's bed-chamber, I shall be able to tell you more.

Ld. T. I will.

Mask. My duty to your lordship makes me do a severe piece of justice——

Ld. T. I will be secret, and reward your honesty beyond your hopes. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE opening, shews Lady Touchwood's Chamber.

Mellefont Solus.

Pray Heav'n my aunt keep touch with her assignation.——Oh that her lord were but sweating behind this hanging, with the expectation of what I shall see——Hist, she comes——Little does she think what a mine is just ready to spring under her feet. But to my post.

[*Goes behind the hangings.*]

Enter Lady Touchwood.

L. T. 'Tis eight o'clock: methinks I should have found him here. Who does not prevent the hour of love,

Love, out-stays the time; for to be duly punctual, is too slow.—I was accusing you of neglect.

Enter Maskwell.

Mask. I confess you do reproach me when I see you here before me; but 'tis fit I should be still behind hand; still to be more and more indebted to your goodness.

L. T. You can excuse a fault too well, not to have been to blame—A ready answer shews you were prepar'd.

Mask. Guilt is ever at a loss, and confusion waits upon it; when innocence and bold truth are always ready for expression——

L. T. Not in love; words are the weak support of cold indifference; love has no language to be heard.

Mask. Excess of joy has made me stupid? Thus may my lips be ever clos'd. [*Kisses her.*] And thus——Oh 'who would not lose his speech, upon condition to have joys above it?'

L. T. Hold, let me lock the door first.

[*Goes to the door.*]

Mask. [*Aside.*] That I believ'd; 'twas well I left the private passage open.

L. T. So, that's safe.

Mask. And so may all your pleasures be, and secret as this kiss——

Mel. And may all treachery be thus discover'd.

[*Leaps out.*]

L. T. Ah!

[*Shrieks.*]

Mel. Villain!

[*Offers to draw.*]

Mask. Nay then, there's but one way.

[*Runs out.*]

Mel. Say you so, were you provided for an escape? Hold madam, you have no more holes for your escape; I stand between you and this sally-port.

L. T. Shame grief and ruin haunt thee for this deceit, Oh! I could rack myself, play the vulture to my own heart, and gnaw it peace meal, for not boding to me this misfortune.

Mel. Be patient.——

L. T. Patient!

Mel. Consider I have you on the hook; you will but flounder

flounder yourself a-weary, and be nevertheless my prisoner.

L. T. I'll hold my breath and die, but I'll be free.

Mel. O madam, have a care of dying unprepar'd, I doubt you have some unrepented sins that may hang heavy, and retard your flight.

L. T. O! what shall I do? say? Whither shall I turn?
'Has hell no remedy?

'Mel. None, hell has serv'd you ev'n as Heav'n has done, left you to yourself.--You're in a kind of *Erasmus's* paradise; yet if you please you may make it a purgatory; and with a little penance and my absolution, all this may turn to good account.'

L. T. [*Aside.*] Hold in my passion, and fall, fall a little thou swelling heart; let me have some intermission of this rage, and one minute's coolness to dissemble.

[*She weeps.*]

Mel. You have been to blame.--I like those tears, and hope they are of the purest kind.--Penitential tears.

L. T. O the scene was shifted quick before me—I had not time to think—I was surprized to see a monster in the glass, and now I find it is myself; can you have mercy to forgive the faults I have imagin'd, but never put in practice—O consider, consider how fatal you have been to me, you have already kill'd the quiet of this life. The love of you was the first wand'ring fire that e'er misled my steps, and while I had only that in view, I was betray'd into unthought of ways of ruin.

Mel. May I believe this true?

L. T. O be not cruelly incredulous—How can you doubt these streaming eyes? Keep the severest eye o'er all my future conduct: and if I once relapse, let me not hope forgiveness, 'twill ever be in your power to ruin me—My lord shall sign to your desires; I will myself create you happiness, and *Cynthia* shall be this night your bride—Do but conceal my failings, and forgive.

Mel. Upon such terms, I will ever be your's in ev'ry honest way.

Maskwell softly introduces Lord Touchwood, and retires.

Mask. I have kept my word, he's here, but I must not be seen.

Ld. T.

Ld. T. Hell and amazement, she's in tears.

L. T. [*Kneeling.*] Eternal blessings thank you—
Ha! my lord list'ning! O fortune has o'erpaid me all,
all! all's my own! [*Aside.*]

Mel. Nay, I beseech you rise.

L. T. [*Aloud.*] Never, never! I'll grow to the ground,
be buried quick beneath it, ere I'll be consenting to so
damn'd a sin as incest! unnatural incest!

Mel. Ha!

L. T. O cruel man, will you not let me go—I'll for-
give all that's past—O Heav'n, you will not ravish me!

Mel. Confusion!

Ld. T. Monster, dog! your life shall answer this—

[*Draws and runs at Mel. is held by Lady Touchwood.*]

L. T. O 'Heav'ns' my Lord! Hold, hold, for
mercy's sake!

Mel. Confusion, my uncle! O the curs'd forcerefs.

L. T. Moderate your rage, good my lord! He's mad,
alas he's mad—Indeed he is, my Lord, and knows not
what he does—See how wild he looks.

Mel. By Heav'n 'twere senseless not to be mad, and
see such witchcraft.

L. T. My Lord, you hear him, he talks idly.

Ld. T. Hence from my sight, thou living infamy to
my name; when next I see that face, I'll write villain
in't with my sword's point.

Mel. Now, by my life, I will not go 'till I have made
known my wrongs—Nay, 'till I have made known yours,
which (if possible) are greater—though she has all the
host of hell her servants.

L. T. Alas he raves! talks very poetry. For Heav'n's
sake, away my Lord, he'll either tempt you to extrava-
gance, or commit some himself.

Mel. Death and furies, will you not hear me?—Why
by Heav'n she laughs, grins, points at you, makes you
her mark of insult and derision!

[*As she is going she turns back and smiles at him.*]

Ld. T. I fear he's mad indeed—Let's send *Maskwell*
to him.

Mel. Send him to her.

L. T.

L. T. Come, come, good my Lord, my heart akes so I shall faint if I stay. [*Exeunt Lord and Lady Touchwood.*]

Mel. O I could curse my stars, fate, and chance; all causes and accidents of fortune in this life! But to what purpose? Yet, 'sdeath for a man to have the fruit of all his industry grow full and ripe, ready to drop into his mouth, and just when he holds out his hand to gather it to have a sudden whirlwind come, tear up tree and all, and bear away the very root and foundation of his hopes; What temper can contain? They talk of sending *Maskwell* to me; I never had more need of him—But what can he do? Imagination cannot form a fairer and more plausible design than this of his which has miscarried—O my precious aunt, I shall never thrive without I deal with the devil or another woman.

*Women like flames, have a destroying pow'r,
Ne'er to be quench'd, 'till they themselves devour.* [*Exit.*]

A C T V.

Enter Lady Touchwood and Maskwell.

L. T. **W**AS'T not lucky?
Mask. Lucky! Fortune is your own, and 'tis her interest so to be; ' by Heav'n I believe you can controll her pow'r, and she fears it; though chance brought my lord, 'twas your own art that turn'd it to advantage.

L. T. 'Tis true, it might have been my ruin—But yonder's my lord, I believe he's coming to find you; I'll not be seen. [*Exit.*]

Mask. So; I durst not own my introducing my lord, though it succeeded well for her, for she would have suspected a design which I should have been puzzled to excuse. My lord is thoughtful—I'll be so too; yet he shall know my thoughts; or think he does——

Enter Lord Touchwood.

Mask. What have I done?

Ld. T.

Ld. T. Talking to himself!

Mask. 'Twas honest—and shall I be rewarded for it? No? 'twas honest, therefore I shan't;—Nay, rather therefore I ought not; for it rewards itself.

Ld. T. Unequal'd virtue; [Aside.

Mask. But should it be known! then I have lost a friend! He was an ill man, and I have gain'd; for half myself I lent him, and that I have recall'd; so I have served myself, and what is yet better, I have served a worthy lord to whom I owe myself.

Ld. T. Excellent man! [Aside.

Mask. Yet I am wretched—O there is a secret burns within this breast, which should it once blaze forth, would ruin all, consume my honest character, and brand me with the name of villain.

Ld. T. Ha!

Mask. Why do I love! Yet Heav'n and my waking conscience are my witnesses, I never gave one working thought a vent; which might discover that I lov'd, nor ever must; no, let it prey upon my heart; for I would rather die, than seem once, barely seem, dishonest:—O, should it once be known I love fair *Cynthia*, all this that I have done, would look like rival's malice, false friendship to my lord, and base self-interest. Let me perish first, and from this hour avoid all sight and speech, and, if I can, all thought of that pernicious beauty. Ha! but what is my distraction doing? I'm wildly talking to myself, and some ill chance might have directed malicious ears this way. [Seems to start, seeing my Lord.

Ld. T. Start not—let guilty and dishonest souls start at the revelation of their thoughts, but be thou fix'd, as is thy virtue.

Mask. I am confounded and beg your lordship's pardon for those free discourses which I have had with myself.

Ld. T. Come, I beg your pardon that I over-heard you, and yet it shall not need—Honest *Maskwell*! thy and my good genius led me hither—Mine, in that I have discover'd so much manly virtue; thine, in that thou shalt have due reward of all thy worth. Give me thy hand—my nephew

nephew is the alone remaining branch of all our ancient family; him I thus blow away, and constitute thee in his room to be my heir——

Mask. Now fate forbid——

Ld. T. No more—I have resolv'd—The writings are ready drawn, and wanted nothing but to be sign'd, and have his name inserted—Your's will fill the blank as well——I will have no reply—Let me command this time; for 'tis the last, in which I will assume authority——hereafter, you shall rule where I have power.

Mask. I humbly would petition.—

Ld. T. Is't for yourself?—[*Mask. pauses.*] I'll hear of nought for any body else.

Mask. Then, witness Heav'n, for me, this wealth and honour was not of my seeking, nor would I build my fortune on another's ruin: I had but one desire——

Ld. T. Thou shalt enjoy it——If all I'm worth in wealth or interest can purchase *Cynthia*, she is thine——I'm sure Sir *Paul's* consent will follow fortune; I'll quickly shew him which way that is going.

Mask. You oppress me with bounty; my gratitude is weak, and shrinks beneath the weight, and cannot rise to thank you—What, enjoy my love! forgive the transports of a blessing so unexpected, so unhop'd for, so unthought of!

Ld. T. I will confirm it, and rejoice with thee.

[*Exit.*]

Mask. This is prosp'rous indeed—Why let him find me out a villain, settled in possession of a fair estate, and full fruition of my love, I'll bear the railings of a losing gamester——But shou'd he find me out before! 'tis dangerous to delay———Let me think———shou'd my lord proceed to treat openly of my marriage with *Cynthia*, all must be discover'd, and *Mellefont* can be no longer blinded.———It must not be; nay, shou'd my lady know it———ay, then were fine work indeed! Her fury wou'd spare nothing, tho' she involv'd herself in ruin. No, it must be by stratagem——I must deceive *Mellefont* once more, and get my lord to consent to my private management. He comes opportunely———Now will I, in my old way, discover the whole.

whole and real truth of the matter to him, that he may not suspect one word on't.

*No Mask like open truth to cover lies,
As to go naked is the best disguise.*

Enter Mellefont.

Mel. O *Maskwell*, what hopes? I am confounded in a maze of thoughts, each leading into another, and all ending in perplexity. My uncle will not hear nor see me.

Mask. No matter, sir, don't trouble your head, all's in my power.

Mel. How? For Heav'n's sake?

Mask. Little do you think that your aunt has kept her word.—How the devil she wrought my lord into this dotage, I know not; but he's gone to Sir *Paul* about my marriage with *Cynthia*, and has appointed me his heir.

Mel. The devil he has! What's to be done?

Mask. I have it, it must be by stratagem; for it's in vain to make application to him. I think I have that in my head that cannot fail: Where's *Cynthia*?

Mel. In the garden.

Mask. Let us go and consult her, my life for your's, I cheat my lord. *[Exeunt.]*

Enter Lord and Lady Touchwood.

L. T. *Maskwell* your heir, and marry *Cynthia*!

Ld. T. I cannot do too much for so much merit.

L. T. But this is a thing of too great moment to be so suddenly resolv'd. Why *Cynthia*? Why must he be marry'd? Is there not reward enough in raising his low fortune, but he must mix his blood with mine, and wed my niece? How know you that my brother will consent, or she? Nay, he himself perhaps may have some affections elsewhere.

Ld. T. No, I am convinc'd he loves her.

L. T. *Maskwell*, love *Cynthia*, impossible!

Ld. T. I tell you, he confess'd it to me.

L. T. Confusion! how's this!

[Aside.]

Ld. T. His humility long stifled his passion: and his love of *Mellefont* would have made him still conceal it,—But by encouragement, I wrung the secret from him; and know he's no way to be rewarded but with her. I'll defer my farther proceedings in it, 'till you have consider'd it; but remember how we are both indebted to him.

[Exit.]

L. T.

L. T. Both indebted to him! Yes, we are both indebted to him, if you knew all; villain! Oh, I am wild with this surprize of treachery: It is impossible, it cannot be.—He love *Cynthia*! What have I been assisting to his designs, his property only, ‘a baiting place!’ Now I see what made him false to *Mellefont*,———Shame and distraction! I cannot bear it: ‘oh! what woman can bear ‘to be a property? To be kindled to a flame, only to ‘light him to another’s arms; oh! that I were fire indeed, that I might burn the vile traitor.’ What shall I do? How shall I think? I cannot think,———All my designs are lost, my love unsated, my revenge unfinish’d, and fresh cause of fury from unthought of plagues.

Enter Sir Paul Plyant.

Sir Paul. Madam, sister, my lady sister, did you see my lady my wife!

L. T. O Torture!

Sir Paul. Gads-bud, I can’t find her high nor low; where can she be, think you?

L. T. Where she’s serving you, as all your sex ought to be serv’d; making you a beast. Don’t you know that you’re a fool, brother?

Sir Paul. A fool; he, he, he! you’re merry—No, no, not I, I know no such matter.

L. T. Why then you don’t know half your happiness.

Sir Paul. That’s a jest with all my heart, faith and troth.—But hark’ye, my lord told me something of a revolution of things; I don’t know what to make on’t——Gads-bud, I must consult my wife,——he talks of disinheriting his nephew; and I don’t know what,—look you, sister, I must know what my girl has to trust to; or not a syllable of a wedding, gads-bud—‘to shew ‘you that I am not a fool.’

L. T. Hear me; consent to the breaking off this marriage, and the promoting any other, without consulting me, and I’ll renounce all blood, all relation and concern with you for ever,——nay, I’ll be you enemy, and pursue you to destruction, I’ll tear your eyes out, and tread you under my feet.———

Sir Paul

Sir Paul. Why, what's the matter now? Good Lord, what's all this for? Pooh, here's a joke indeed—Why, where's my wife?

L. T. With *Careless*, fool! most likely.

Sir Paul. O, if she be with Mr. *Careless*, 'tis well enough.

L. T. Fool, sot, insensible ox! but remember what I said to you, or you had better see my face no more; by this light you had.

Sir Paul. You're a passionate woman, gads-bud,—
But to say truth, all our family are cholerick; I am the only peaceable person amongst 'em. [Exeunt.]

Enter Mellefont, Maskwell and Cynthia.

Mel. I know no other way but this he has propos'd; if you have love enough to run the venture.

Cynt. I don't know whether I have love enough—but I find I have obstinacy enough to pursue whatever I have once resolv'd; and a true female courage to oppose any thing that resists my will, tho' 'twere reason itself.

Mask. That's right,—Well, I'll secure the writings, and run the hazard along with you.

Cynt. But how can the coach and six horses be got ready without suspicion?

Mask. Leave it to my care; that shall be so far from being suspected, that it shall be got ready by my lord's own order.

Mel. How?

Mask. Why, I intend to tell my lord the whole matter of our contrivance, that's my way.

Mel. I don't understand you.

Mask. Why, I'll tell my lord, I laid this plot with you, on purpose to betray you; and that which put me upon it, was, the finding it impossible to gain the lady any other way, but in the hopes of her marrying you.—

Mel. So ———

Mask. So, why so, while you're busied in making yourself ready, I'll wheedle her into the coach; and instead of you, borrow my lord's chaplain, and so run away with her myself.

Mel. Oh! I conceive you, you'll tell him so?

Mask.

Mask. Tell him so! ay, why you don't think I mean to do so?

Mel. No, no! ha, ha! I dare swear thou wilt not.

Mask. Therefore for our farther security, I would have you disguis'd like a parson, that if my lord should have curiosity to peep, he may not discover you in the coach, but think the cheat is carried on as he would have it.

Mel. Excellent *Maskwell*! thou wert certainly meant for a statesman or a Jesuit,———but thou art too honest for one, and too pious for the other.

Mask. Well, get yourselves ready, and meet me in half an hour, yonder in my lady's dressing-room; 'go by the back stairs, and so we may slip down without being observ'd.'—I'll send the chaplain to you with his robes; I have made him my own,——and ordered him to meet us to-morrow morning at St. *Albans*; there we will sum up this account, to all our satisfactions.

Mel. Should I begin to thank or praise thee, I should waste the little time we have. [Exit.

Mask. Madam, you will be ready?

Cynt. I will be punctual to the minute. [Going.

Mask. Stay, I have a doubt—Upon second thoughts, we had better meet in the chaplain's chamber here, the corner chamber at this end of the gallery, there is a back way into it, so that you need not come through this door——and a pair of private stairs leading down to the stables——It will be more convenient.

Cynt. I am guided by you,—but *Mellefont* will mistake.

Mask. No, no, I'll after him immediately, and tell him.

Cynt. I will not fail. [Exit.

Mask. Why, *qui vult decipi, decipiatur*.—'Tis no fault of mine, I have told 'em in plain terms, how easy 'tis for me to cheat 'em; and if they will not hear the serpent's hiss, they must be stung into experience, and future caution.——Now to prepare my lord to consent to this.——But first I must instruct my little Levite; there is no plot, publick or private, that can expect to prosper without one of them has a finger in't, he promised me to be within at this hour,——Mr. *Saygrace*, Mr. *Saygrace*, [Goes to the chamber door, and knocks.

Saygr.

Sayg. [*looking out.*] Sweet sir, I will but pen the last line of an acrostick, and be with you in the twinkling of an ejaculation, in the pronouncing of an *Amen*, or before you can ———

Mask. Nay, good Mr. *Saygrace*, do not prolong the time, by describing to me the shortness of your stay; rather if you please, defer the finishing of your wit, and let us talk about our business, it shall be tithes in your way.

Sayg. [*Enters*] You shall prevail, I would break off in the middle of a sermon to do you a pleasure.

Mask. You could not do me a greater,—except—the business in hand——Have you provided a habit for *Mellefont*?

Sayg. I have, they are ready in my chamber, together with a clean starch'd band and cuffs.

Mask. Good, let them be carry'd to him,——have you fitch'd the gown sleeve, that he may be puzzled, and waste time in putting it on?

Sayg. I have; the gown will not be indued without perplexity.

Mask. Meet me in half an hour, here in your own chamber. When *Cynthia* comes, let there be no light, and do not speak, that she may not distinguish you from *Mellefont*. I'll urge haste, to excuse your silence.

Sayg. You have no more commands?

Mask. None, your text is short.

Sayg. But pithy, and I will handle it with discretion.

Mask. It will be the first you have so serv'd.

[*Exit Saygrace.*]

Enter Lord Touchwood.

Ld. T. Sure I was born to be controlled by those I should command: My very slaves will shortly give me rules how I shall govern them.

Mask. I am concern'd to see your lordship discompos'd ———

Ld. T. Have you seen my wife lately, or disoblig'd her?

Mask. No my lord. What can this mean! [*Aside.*]

Ld. T. Then *Mellefont* has urg'd some body to incense her

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her—Something she has heard of you which carries her beyond the bounds of patience.

Mask. This I fear'd. [*Aside.*] Did not your lordship tell her of the honours you design'd me?

Ld. T. Yes.

Mask. 'Tis that; you know my lady has a high spirit, she thinks I am unworthy.

Ld. T. Unworthy! 'Tis an ignorant pride in her to think so——Honesty to me is true nobility. However, 'tis my will it shall be so, and that shou'd be convincing to her as much as reason——By Heav'n, I'll not be wise-ridden; were it possible, it should be done this night.

Mask. By Heav'n he meets my wishes. [*Aside.*] Few things are impossible to willing minds.

Ld. T. Instruct me how this may be done, you shall see I want no inclination.

Mask. I had laid a small design for to-morrow (as love will be inventing) which I thought to communicate to your lordship——But it may be as well done to-night.

Ld. T. Here's company——Come this way, and tell me. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Careless and Cynthia.

Care. Is not that he, now gone out with my lord?

Cynt. Yes.

Care. By Heav'n there's treachery——The confusion that I saw your father in, my Lady *Touchwood's* passion, with what imperfectly I over-heard between my lord and her, confirm me in my fears. Where's *Mellefont*?

Cynt. Here he comes.

Enter Mellefont.

Did *Maskwell* tell you any thing of the chaplain's chamber?

Mel. No; my dear, will you get ready——the things are all in my chamber; I want nothing but the habit.

Care. You are betray'd, and *Maskwell* is the villain I always thought him.

Cynt. When you were gone, he said his mind was chang'd, and bid me meet him in the chaplain's room, pretending

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pretending immediately to follow you, and give you notice.

Mel. How!

Care. There's *Saygrace* tripping by with a bundle under his arm—He cannot be ignorant that *Maskwell* means to use his chamber; let's follow and examine him.

Mel. 'Tis loss of time—I cannot think him false.

[*Exit Mellefont.*]

Enter Lord Touchwood.

Cynt. My lord musing!

Ld. T. He has a quick invention, if this were suddenly design'd—Yet he says he had prepar'd my chaplain already.

Cynt. How's this! Now I fear indeed.

Ld. T. *Cynthia* here! Alone, fair cousin, and melancholy?

Cynt. Your lordship was thoughtful.

Ld. T. My thoughts were on serious business, not worth your hearing.

Cynt. Mine were on treachery concerning you, and may be worth your hearing.

Ld. T. Treachery concerning me! pray be plain—Hark! What noise!

Mask. [*Within.*] Will you not hear me?

L. T. [*Within.*] No, monster! Traitor! No.

Cynt. My lady and *Maskwell*! this may be lucky—My lord, let me intreat you to stand behind this skreen, and listen; perhaps this chance may give you proof of what you ne'er could have believ'd from my suspicions.

Enter Lady Touchwood with a dagger, and Maskwell:

Cynthia and Lord Touchwood listening.

L. T. You want but leisure to invent fresh falsehood, and sooth me to a fond belief of all your fictions; but I will stab the lye that's forming in your heart, and save a sin, in pity to your soul.

Mask. Strike then—Since you will have it so.

L. T. Ha! A steady villain to the last!

Mask. Come, why do you dally with me thus?

L. T. Thy stubborn temper shocks me, and you knew it would—this is cunning all, and not courage; no I know the well: but thou shalt miss thy aim.

Mask.

Mask. Ha, ha, ha!

L. T. Ha! do you mock my rage? Then this shall punish your fond, rash contempt! Again smile!

[*Goes to strike.*]

And such a smile as speaks in ambiguity!

Ten thousand meanings lurk in each corner of that various face.

O! that they were written in thy heart,

That I, with this, might lay thee open to my sight!

But then 'twill be too late to know——

Thou hast, thou hast found the only way to turn my Rage; too well thou know'st my jealous soul cou'd never bear uncertainty. Speak then, and tell me—Yet are you silent? Oh, I am wilder'd in all passions! but thus my anger melts. [*Weeps.*] Here, take this poniard, for my very spirits faint, and I want strength to hold it, thou hast disarm'd my soul.

[*Gives the dagger.*]

Ld. T. Amazement shakes me.—Where will this end?

Mask. So, 'tis well——let your wild fury have a vent? and when you have temper, tell me.

L. T. Now, now, now I am calm, and can hear you.

Mask. [*Aside.*] Thanks, my invention; and now I have it for you.—First tell me what urg'd you to this violence? For your passion broke in such imperfect terms, that yet I am to learn the cause.

L. T. My Lord himself surpriz'd me with the news, you were to marry *Cynthia*——That you had own'd your love to him, and his indulgence would assist you to attain your ends.

Cynt. How, my lord!

Ld. T. Pray forbear all resentments for a while, and let us hear the rest.

Mask. I grant you in appearance all is true; I seem'd consenting to my lord; nay, transported with the blessing——But could you think that I, who had been happy in your lov'd embraces, could e'er be fond of an inferior slavery?

Ld. T. 'Ha!' O poison to my ears! what do I hear!

Cynt. Nay, good my lord, forbear resentment, let us hear it out.

Ld. T.

Ld. T. Yes, I will contain, tho' I cou'd burst.

Mask. 'I that had wanton'd in the rich circle of your world of love, cou'd be confin'd within the puny province of a girl?' No——Yet tho' I dote on each last favour more than all the rest; though I would give a limb for every look you cheaply throw away on any other object of your love; yet so far I prize your pleasures o'er my own, that all this seeming plot that I have laid, has been to gratify your taste, and cheat the world, to prove a faithful rogue to you.

L. T. If this were true——But how can it be?

Mask. I have so contriv'd, that *Mellefont* will presently in the chaplain's habit, wait for *Cynthia* in your dressing-room: But I have put the change upon her, that she may be elsewhere employ'd—Do you go with your cloak over your face, meet him in her stead; you may go privately by the back stairs, and, unperceiv'd, there you may propose to reinstate him in his uncle's favour, if he'll comply with your desires; his case is desperate, and I believe he'll yield to any conditions.—If not, here take this; you may employ it better, than in the heart of one who is nothing when not your's. [*Gives the dagger.*]

L. T. Thou can't deceive every body,——Nay, thou hast deceiv'd me; but 'tis as I would wish,——Trusty villain! I could worship thee——

Mask. No more.—It wants but a few minutes of the time; and *Mellefont's* love will carry him there before his hour.

L. T. I go, I fly, incomparable *Maskwell*! [*Exit.*]

Mask. So, this was a pinch indeed, my invention was upon the rack; and made discovery of her last plot: I hope *Cynthia* and my chaplain will be ready, I'll prepare for the expedition. [*Exit.*]

Cynthia and Lord Touchwood come forward.

Cynt. Now, my lord?

Ld. T. Astonishment binds up my rage! villainy upon villainy! Heav'ns, what a long track of dark deceit has this discover'd! I am confounded when I look back, and want a clue to guide me through the various mazes of unheard of treachery, My wife! O torture! My shame! My ruin!

Cynt.

Cynt. My lord, have patience, and be sensible how great our happiness is, that this discovery was not made too late.

Ld. T. I thank you, yet it may be still too late, if we don't presently prevent the execution of their plots;—Ha, I'll do't. Where's *Mellefont*, my poor injur'd nephew, —How shall I make him ample satisfaction?—

Cynt. I dare answer for him.

Ld. T. I do him fresh wrong to question his forgiveness; for I know him to be all goodness, —Yet my wife! 'damn her,'—She'll think to meet him in that dressing-room;—Was't not so? And *Maskwell* will expect you in the chaplain's chamber.—For once, I'll add my plot too.—Let us haste to find out, and inform my nephew; and do you, quickly as you can, bring all the company into this gallery.—I'll expose the strumpet, and the villain. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Lord Froth and Sir Paul Plyant.

Ld. Froth. By Heav'ns I have slept an age—Sir *Paul*, what a clock is't? Past eight, on my conscience, my lady's is the most inviting couch; and a slumber there, is the prettiest amusement! but where's all the company?—

Sir Paul. The company, gads-bud, I don't know, my lord, but here's the strangest revolution, all turn'd topsy turvy; as I hope for tranquility.

Ld. Froth. O Heav'ns, what's the matter? Where's my wife?

Sir Paul. All turn'd topsy turvy as sure as a gun.

Ld. Froth. How do you mean! my wife!

Sir Paul. The strangest posture of affairs!

Ld. Froth. What, my wife?

Sir Paul. No, no, I mean the family,—Your lady's affairs may be in a very good posture; I saw her go into the garden with Mr. *Brisk*.

Ld. Froth. How? where, when, what to do?

Sir Paul. I suppose they have been laying their heads together.

Ld. Froth. How?

Sir Paul. Nay, only about poetry, I suppose, my lord; making couplets.

Ld. Froth. Couplets,

Sir Paul. Oh, here they come.

Enter Lady Froth and Brisk.

Brisk. My lord, your humble servant; Sir Paul yours—
the finest night!

L. Froth. My dear, Mr. Brisk and I have been stargazing, I don't know how long.

Sir Paul. Does it not tire your ladyship? are not you weary with looking up?

L. Froth. Oh, no, I love it violently,—My dear, you're melancholy.

Ld. Froth. No, my dear; I'm but just awake.——

L. Froth. Snuff some of my spirit of hartshorn.

Ld. Froth. I've some of my own, thank you, my dear.

L. Froth. Well, I swear, Mr. Brisk, you understood astronomy like an old Egyptian.

Brisk. Not comparably to your ladyship; you are the very Cynthia of the skies, and queen of stars.

L. Froth. That's because I have no light, but what's by reflection from you, who are the sun.

Brisk. Madam, you have eclips'd me quite, let me perish,—I can't answer that.

L. Froth. No matter,—Hark'ee, shall you and I make an almanack together.

Brisk. With all my soul.—Your ladyship has made me the man in't already, I'm so full of the wounds which you have given.

L. Froth. O finely taken! I swear now you are even with me, O Parnassus, you have an infinite deal of wit.

Sir Paul. So he has, gads-bud, and so has your ladyship.

Enter Lady Plyant, Careless and Cynthia.

L. P. You tell me most surprizing things; blefs me, who would ever trust a man? O my heart akes for fear they should be all deceitful alike.

Care. You need not fear, madam, you have charms to fix inconstancy itself.

L. P. O dear, you make me blush.

Ld. Froth. Come, my dear, shall we take leave of my lord and lady?

Cynt. They'll wait upon your lordship presently.

L. Froth. Mr. *Brisk*, my coach shall set you down.

All. What's the matter?

[*A great shriek from the corner of the stage.*]

Lady Touchwood runs out affrighted, my Lord after her, like a Parson.

L. T. O I'm betray'd.—Save me, help me.

Ld. T. Now what evasion, wretch!

L. T. Stand off, let me go.

[*Exit.*]

Ld. T. Go, and thy own infamy pursue thee.—You stare as you were all amazed,—I don't wonder at it.—but too soon you'll know mine, and that woman's shame.

Enter Mellefont disguised in a Parson's Habit and pulling in Maskwell.

Mel. Nay, by Heav'n you shall be seen.—Careless, your hand;—Do you hold down your head? Yes I am your chaplain, look in the face of your injur'd friend; thou wonder of all falshood.

Ld. T. Are you silent, monster?

Mel. Good Heav'ns! How I believ'd and lov'd this man!—Take him hence, for he's a disease to my sight.

Ld. T. Secure that manifold villain.

[*Servants seize him.*]

Care. Miracle of ingratitude?

"Sir Paul. O Providence! Providence! what discoveries are here."

Brisk. This is all very surprizing, let me perish.

L. Froth. You know I told you Saturn look'd a little more angry than usual.

Ld. T. We'll think of punishment at leisure, but let me hasten to do justice, in rewarding virtue and wrong'd innocence.—Nephew, I hope I have your pardon, and *Cynthia's*.

Mel. We are your lordship's creatures.

Ld. T. And be each others comfort;—Let me join your hands.—Uninterrupted bliss attend you both; mutual love, lasting health, and circling joys, tread round each happy year of your long lives.

*Let secret villainy from hence be warn'd ;
 Howe'er in private mischiefs are conceiv'd,
 Torture and shame attend their open birth ;
 Like vipers in the breast, base treachery lies,
 Still gnawing that, whence first it did arise ;
 No sooner born, but the vile parent dies.*

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

E P I L O G U E.

*C O U' D poets but foresee how plays would take,
 Then they cou'd tell what epilogues to make;
 Whether to thank or blame their audience most:
 But that late knowledge does much hazard cost,
 'Till dice are thrown, there's nothing won, nor lost.
 So 'till the thief has stol'n, he cannot know
 Whether he shall escape the law, or no.
 But poets run much greater hazards far,
 Than they who stand their trials at the bar;
 The law provides a curb for its own fury,
 And suffers judges to direct the jury.
 But in this court, what difference does appear!
 For every one's both judge and jury here;
 Nay, and what's worse, an executioner.
 All have a right and title to some part,
 Each choosing that in which he has most art.
 The dreadful men of learning all confound,
 Unless the fable's good, and moral sound.
 The wizar-masks, that are in pit and gallery,
 Approve, or damn the repartee and rally.
 The lady criticks, who are better read,
 Inquire if characters are nicely bred;
 If the soft things are penn'd and spoke with grace:
 They judge of action too, and time, and place;
 In which we do not doubt but they're discerning,
 For that's a kind of assignation learning.
 Beaux judge of dress; the wittlings judge of songs;
 The cuckoldom, of ancient right, to cits belongs.*

Thus

E P I L O G U E.

*Thus poor poets, the favour are deny'd,
 Even to make exceptions, when they're try'd.
 'Tis hard that they must ev'ry one admit :
 Methinks I see some faces in the pit,
 Which must of consequence be foes to wit.
 You who can judge, to sentence may proceed;
 But tho' he cannot write, let him be freed
 At least from their contempt, who cannot read.*

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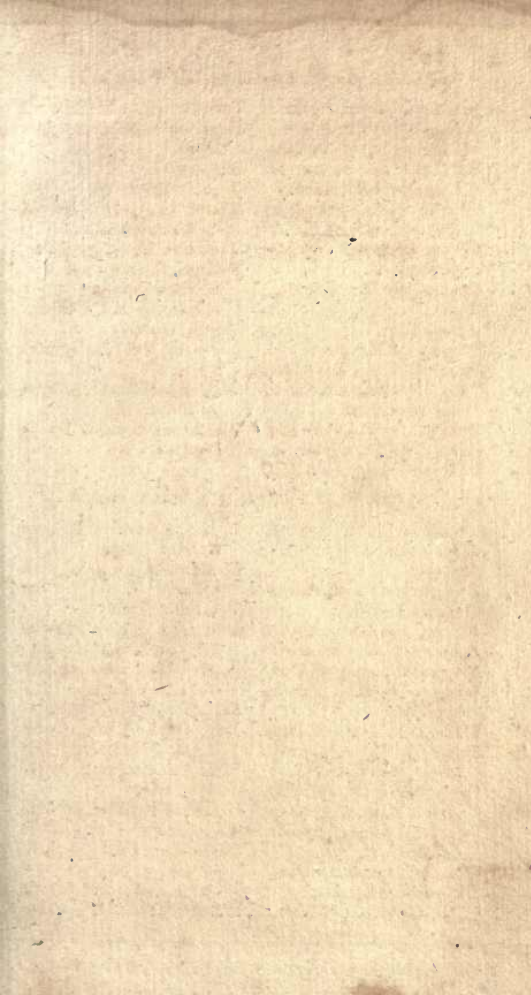
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DOUBLE GALLANT.



Taylor ad viv. del.

Walker sculp.

MRS. ARINGTON as LADY SADLIFE.

Olud! I'm going home this minute: And if you should offer to dog my Chair, I protest I was ever such usage—Lord—sure! oh—Follow me down then.

Published 20 May 1777, by T. L. Cowdell & Partners.

Act 2.^d Sc. 2.^d

T H E
DOUBLE GALLANT:

O R, T H E
SICK LADY'S CURE.

A
C O M E D Y.

WRITTEN BY
COLLEY CIBBER, Esq.

Marked with the Variations of the

M A N A G E R ' s B O O K,


A T T H E
Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.



L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR C. BATHURST, J. RIVINGTON
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M.DCC.LXXVII.

 The Reader is desired to observe, that the Passages omitted in the Representation at the Theatre are here preserved, and marked with single inverted Commas ; as at Lines 18 and 19, in Page 13.

P R O L O G U E.

COU'D those, who never try'd, conceive the sweat,
 The toil requir'd, to make a play complete;
 They'd pardon, or encourage all that cou'd
 Pretend to be but tolerably good.

Plot, wit, and humour's hard to meet in one,
 And yet without 'em all—all's lamely done:
 One wit, perhaps, another humour paints;
 A third designs you well, but genius wants;
 A fourth begins with fire—but, ah! too weak to hold
 it, faints.

A modern bard, who late adorn'd the bays,
 Whose Muse advanc'd his fame to envy'd praise,
 Was still observ'd to want his judgment most in plays.

Those, he too often found, requir'd the pain,
 And stronger forces of a vig'rous brain:
 Nay, even alter'd plays, like old houses mended,
 Cost little less than new, before they're ended;
 At least, our author finds the experience true,
 For equal pains had made this wholly new:

And though the name seems old, the scenes will show
 That 'tis, in fact, no more the same, than now.

Fam'd Chatworth is, what 'twas some years ago.
 Pardon the boldness, that a play should dare,
 With works of so much wonder to compare:

But as that fabrick's ancient walls or wood
 Were little worth, to make this new one good;
 So of this play, we hope, 'tis understood.

For though from former scenes some hints he draws,
 The ground-plot's wholly chang'd from what it was:

Not but he hopes you'll find enough that's new,
 In plot, in persons, wit and humour too:

Yet what's not his, he owns in others right,
 Nor toils he now for fame, but your delight.

If that's attain'd, what matter's whose the play's?
 Applaud the scenes, and strip him of the praise.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

At Drury Lane.
Mr. PARSONS.
Mr. PACKER.
Mr. JEFFERSON.
Mr. KING.
Mr. BADDELEY.
Mr. HURST.
Mr. BURTON.
Mr. KEEN.
Mr. WRIGHTEN.
Mr. WRIGHT.

W O M E N.

Miss YOUNG.
Mrs. ABINGTON.
Mrs. GREVILLE.
Mrs. BADDELEY.
Mrs. DAVIES.
Mrs. BRADSHAW.

Sir Solomon Sadlife,

Clerimont,

Careless,

Atall,

Old Mr. Wilfull,

Sir Harry Atall,

Supple,

Dr. Blister,

Rhubarb,

Finder,

Lady Dainty,

Lady Sadlife,

Clarinda,

Sylvia,

Wishwell,

Situp,

T H E
 DOUBLE GALLANT:
 OR, THE
 SICK LADY'S CURE.

A C T I. S C E N E I. *The park.*

Enter Clerimont and Atall.

Cler. **M**R. *Atall*, your very humble servant.

At. O Clerimont, such an adventure! I was just going to your lodgings, such a transporting accident! in short, I am now positively in love for altogether.

Cler. All the sex together, I believe.

At. Nay if thou dost not believe me, and stand my friend, I am ruin'd past redemption.

Cler. Dear sir, if I stand your friend without believing you, won't that do as well? But why shou'd you think I don't believe you? I have seen you twice in love within this fortnight; and it wou'd be hard indeed to suppose a heart of so much mettle could not hold out a third engagement.

At. Then, to be serious, in one word, I am honourably in love; and, if she proves the woman I am sure she must, will positively marry her.

Cler. Marry! O degenerate virtue!

At. Now will you help me?

Cler. Sir, you may depend upon me:—Pray give me leave first to ask a question or two: What is this honourable lady's name?

6 THE DOUBLE GALLANT: OR,

At. Faith, I don't know.

Cler. What are her parents?

At. I can't tell.

Cler. What fortune has she?

At. I don't know.

Cler. Where does she live?

At. I can't tell.

Cler. A very concise account of the person you design to marry. Pray, sir, what is't you do know of her?

At. That I'll tell you: Coming yesterday from Greenwich by water, I overtook a pair of oars, whose lovely freight was one single lady, and a fellow in a handsome livery in the stern. When I came up, I had at first resolv'd to use the privilege of the element, and bait her with waterman's wit, till I came to the bridge; but, as soon as she saw me, she very prudently prevented my design; and, as I pass'd, bow'd to me with an humble blush, that spoke at once such sense, so just a fear, and modesty, as put the loosest of my thoughts to rout. And when she found her fears had mov'd me into manners, the cautious gloom that sat upon her beauties disappear'd; her sparkling eyes resum'd their native fire; she look'd, she smil'd, she talk'd, while her diffusive charms new fir'd my heart, and gave my soul a softness it never felt before—To be brief, her conversation was as charming as her person, both easy, unconstrain'd, and sprightly: But then her limbs! O rapturous thought! The snowy down upon the wings of unfledg'd love, had never half that softness.

Cler. Raptures indeed. Pray, sir, how came you so well acquainted with her limbs?

At. By the most fortunate misfortune sure that ever was: For, as we were shooting the bridge, her boat, by the negligence of the waterman, running against the piles, was overset; out jumps the footman to take care of a single rogue, and down went the poor lady to the bottom. My boat being before her, the stream drove her, by the help of her cloaths, towards me; at sight of her I plung'd in, caught her in my arms, and, with much ado, supported her till my waterman pull'd in to save us. But the charming difficulty of her getting into the boat, gave me a transport that all the wide water in the Thames had not power to cool; for, sir, while I was giving

giving her a lift into the boat, I found the floating of her cloaths had left her lovely limbs beneath as bare as new-born Venus rising from the sea.

Cler. What an impudent happiness art thou capable of!

At. When she was a little recover'd from her fright she began to enquire my name, abode, and circumstances, that she might know to whom she ow'd her life and preservation. Now, to tell you the truth, I durst not trust her with my real name, lest she should from thence have discover'd that my father was now actually under bonds to marry me to another woman; so faith I ev'n told her my name was Freeman, a Gloucestershire gentleman, of a good estate, just come to town about a chancery suit. Besides, I was unwilling any accident should let my father know of my being yet in England, lest he should find me out, and force me to marry the woman I never saw (for which, you know, he commanded me home) before I have time to prevent it.

Cler. Well, but cou'd not you learn the lady's name all this while?

At. No faith, she was inexorable to all intreaties; only told me in general terms, that if what I vow'd to her was sincere, she wou'd give me a proof in a few days what hazards she would run to requite my services; so after having told her where she might hear of me, I saw her into a chair, press'd her by the cold rosy fingers, kiss'd 'em warm, and parted.

Cler. What! Then you are quite off of the lady, I suppose, that you made an acquaintance with in the park last week.

At. No, no; not so neither: One's my Juno, all pride and beauty; but this my Venus, all life, love, and softness. Now, what I beg of thee, dear Clerimont, is this: Mrs. Juno, as I told you, having done me the honour of a civil visit or two at my own lodgings, I must needs borrow thine to entertain Mrs. Venus in; for if the rival goddesses should meet and clash, you know there wou'd be the devil to do between them.

Cler. Well, sir, my lodgings are at your service; But you must be very private and sober, I can tell you; for my landlady's a presbyterian; if she suspects your design, you're blown up, depend upon't.

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At. Don't fear, I'll be as careful as a guilty conscience: But I want immediate possession; for I expect to hear from her every moment, and have already directed her to send thither. Pr'ythee come with me.

Cler. Faith you must excuse me; I expect some ladies in the park that I wou'd not miss of for an empire: But yonder's my servant, he shall conduct you.

At. Very good! that will do as well then; I'll send my man along with him to expect her commands, and call me if she sends: And in the mean time I'll e'en go home to my own lodgings; for, to tell you the truth, I expect a small message there from my goddess imperial. And I am not so much in love with my new bird in the bush, as to let t'other fly out of my hand for her.

Cler. And pray, sir, what name does your goddess imperial, as you call her, know you by?

At. O, sir, with her I pass for a man of arms, and am call'd Col. Standfast; with my new face, John Freeman, of Flatland-Hall, esq. But time flies; I must leave you.

Cler. Well, dear Atall, I'm yours—Good luck to you. [*Exit At.*] What a happy fellow is this, that owes his success with the women purely to his inconstancy? Here comes another too almost as happy as he, a fellow that's wise enough to be but half in love, and make his whole life a studied idleness.

Enter Careless.

So, Careless! you're constant, I see, to your morning's saunter. Well! how stand matters? I hear strange things of thee; that after having rail'd at marriage all thy life, thou hast resolv'd to fall into the noose at last.

Care. I don't see any great terror in the noose, as you call it, when a man's weary of liberty: The liberty of playing the fool, when one's turn'd of thirty, is not of much value.

Cler. Hey-day! Then you begin to have nothing in your head now, but settlements, children, and the main chance?

Care. Ev'n so faith; but in hopes to come at 'em too, I am for'd very often to make my way through pills, elixirs, bolus's, ptizans, and gallipots.

Cler.

Cler. What, is your mistress an apothecary's widow?

Care. No, but she is an apothecary's shop, and keeps as many drugs in her bed-chamber; she has her physic for every hour of the day and night—for 'tis vulgar, she says, to be a moment in rude and perfect health. Her bed lin'd with poppies; the black boys at the feet, that the healthy employ to bear flowers in their arms, she loads with diascordium, and other sleepy potions; her sweet-bags, instead of the common and offensive smells of musk and amber, breathe nothing but the more modish and salubrious scents of hart's-horn, rue, and assafoetida.

Cler. Why, at this rate, she's only fit to be the comfort of Hippocrates. But pray what other charms has this extraordinary lady?

Care. She has one, Tom, that a man may relish without being so deep a physician.

Cler. What's that?

Care. Why, two thousand pounds a year.

Cler. No vulgar beauty, I confess, sir; but can'st thou for any consideration throw thyself into this hospital, this box of physic, and lie all night like leaf-gold upon a pill?

Care. O, dear sir, this is not half the evil; her humour is as fantastic as her diet; nothing that is English must come near her; all her delight is in foreign imper tinencies: Her rooms are all of Japan or Persia, her dress Indian, and her equipage are all monsters: The coachman came over with his horses, both from Russia, Flanders are too common; the rest of her trim are a motly crowd of blacks, tawny, olives, feulamots, and pale blues: In short, she's for any thing that comes from beyond sea; her greatest monsters are those of her own country; and she's in love with nothing o'this side the line, but the apothecaries.

Cler. Apothecaries quotha! why your fine lady, for aught I see, is a perfect dose of folly and physic; in a month's time she'll grow like an antimonial cup, and a kiss will be able to work with you.

Care. But to prevent that, Tom, I design upon the wedding-day to break all her gallipots, kick the doctor down stairs, and force her, instead of physic, to take a

10 THE DOUBLE GALLANT: OR,

heartly meal of a swinging rump of boil'd beef and carrots, and so 'faith I have told her.

Cler. That's something familiar: Are you so near man and wife?

Care. O nearer; for I sometimes plague her till she hates the very sight of me.

Cler. Ha! ha! very good! So being a very troublesome lover, you pretend to cure her of her physic by a counter poison.

Care. Right; I intend to see a doctor to prescribe her an hour of my conversation to be taken every night and morning; and this to be continued till her fever of aversion's over.

Cler. An admirable recipe!

Care. Well, Tom, but how stands thy own affair? Is Clarinda kind yet?

Cler. Faith I can't say she's absolutely kind, but she's pretty near it; for she's grown so ridiculously ill-humour'd to me of late, that if she keeps the same airs a week longer, I am in hopes to find as much ease from her folly, as my constancy would from her good-nature — But to be plain, I'm afraid I have some secret rival in the case; for women's vanity seldom gives them courage enough to use an old lover heartily ill, till they are first sure of a new one, that they intend to use better.

Care. What says Sir Solomon? He is your friend, I presume?

Cler. Yes, at least I can make him so when I please: There is an odd five hundred pound in her fortune; that he has a great mind shou'd stick to his fingers, when he pays in the rest on't; which I am afraid I must comply with, for she can't easily marry without his consent. And yet she's so alter'd in her behaviour of late, that I scarce know what to do — Pr'ythee take a turn and advise me.

Care. With all my heart.

[*Exeunt.*]

The SCENE changes to Sir Solomon Sadlife's house.

Enter Sir Solomon, and Supple his man.

Sir Sol. Supple, dost not thou perceive I put a great confidence in thee? I trust thee with my bosom secrets.

Sup.

Sup. Yes, sir.

Sir Sol. Ah, Supple! I begin to hate my wife—but be secret.

Sup. I'll never tell while I live, sir.

Sir Sol. Nay, then I'll trust thee further: Between thee and I, Supple, I have reason to believe my wife hates me too.

Sup. Ah! dear sir, I doubt that's no secret; for to say the truth, my lady's bitter young and gamesome.

Sir Sol. But can she have the impudence, think'st thou, to make a cuckold of a knight, one that was dubb'd by the royal sword?

Sup. Alas! sir, I warrant she has the courage of a countess; if she's once provok'd, she cares not what she does in her passion, if you were ten times a knight, she'd give you dub for dub, sir.

Sir Sol. Ah! Supple, when her blood's up, I confess she's the devil; and I question if the whole conclave of cardinals could lay her. But suppose she shou'd resolve to give me a sample of her sex, and make me a cuckold in cool blood?

Sup. Why, if she shou'd, sir, don't take it so to heart, cuckolds are no such monsters now-a-days: In the city you know, sir, it's so many honest men's fortune, that no body minds it there; and at this end of the town a cuckold has as much respect as his wife, for aught I see; for gentlemen don't know but it may be their own case another day, and so people are willing to do as they would be done by.

Sir Sol. And yet I do not think but my spouse is honest—and think she is not—wou'd I were satisfy'd.

Sup. Troth, sir, I don't know what to think, but in my conscience I believe good looking after her can do her no harm.

Sir Sol. Right, Supple; and in order to it, I'll first demolish her visiting days. For how do I know but they may be so many private clubs for cuckoldom?

Sup. Ah! sir, your worship knows I was always against your coming to this end of the town.

Sir Sol. Thou wert indeed, my honest Supple: But woman! fair and faithless woman, worm'd and work'd me to her wishes; like fond Mark Anthony I let my empire moulder from my hands, and gave up all for love.—

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love.—I must have a young wife, with a murrain to me—I hate her to—and yet the devil on't is, I'm still jealous of her—Stay! let me reckon up all the fashionable virtues she has that can make a man happy. In the first place—I think her very ugly. —

Sup. Ah! that's because you are marry'd to her, sir.

Sir Sol. As for her expences, no arithmetic can reach 'em; she's always longing for something dear and useless; she will certainly ruin me in china, silks, ribbands, fans, laces, perfumes, washes, powder, patches, jessamine-gloves, and ratifia.

Sup. Ah! sir, that's a cruel liquor with 'em.

Sir Sol. To sum up all wou'd run me mad—The only way to put a stop to her career, must be to put off my coach, turn away her chairmen, lock out her Swiss porter, bar up the doors, keep out all visitors, and then she'll be less expensive.

Sup. Ay, sir, for few women think it worth their while to dress for their husbands.

Sir Sol. Then we shan't be plagu'd with my old lady Tittle Tattle's howd'ye's in a morning, nor my lady Dainty's spleen, or the sudden indisposition of that grim beast her horrible Dutch mastiff.

Sup. No, sir, nor the impertinence of that great fat creature, my Lady Swill-Tea.

Sir Sol. And her squinting daughter.——No, Supple, after this night, nothing in petticoats shall come within ten yards of my doors.

Sup. Nor in breeches neither?

Sir Sol. Only Mr. Clerimont; for I expect him to sign articles with me for the five hundred pounds he is to give me, for that ungovernable jade my niece Clarinda.——But now to my own affairs. I'll step into the park, and see if I can meet with my hopeful spouse there, I warrant, engag'd in some innocent freedom, as she calls it, as walking in a mask, to laugh at the impertinencies of fops that don't know her; but 'tis more likely, I'm afraid, a plot to intrigue with those that do. Oh! how many torments lie in the small circle of a wedding-ring! [Exeunt.]

ACT II. SCENE Clarinda's apartment.

Enter Clarinda and Sylvia.

Clar. **H**A! ha! poor Sylvia!
Syl. Nay, pr'ythee, don't laugh at me. There's no accounting for inclination: For if there were, you know, why should it be a greater folly in me, to fall in love with a man I never saw but once in my life, than it is in you to resist an honest gentleman, whose fidelity has deserv'd your heart an hundred times over.

Clar. Ah! but an utter stranger, cousin, and one that, for aught you know, may be no gentleman.

Syl. That's impossible; his conversation could not be counterfeit. An elevated wit, and good breeding, have a natural lustre that's inimitable. Beside, he sav'd my life at the hazard of his town; so that part of what I gave him, is but gratitude.

Clar. Well! you are the first woman that ever took fire in the middle of the Thames, sure. But suppose now he is marry'd, and has three or four children!

Syl. Psha! prythee don't tease me with so many ill-natur'd objections: I tell you he is not marry'd, I am sure he is not; for I never saw a face look more in humour in my life.—Beside, he told me himself, he was a country gentleman, just come to town upon business: And I'm resolv'd to believe him.

Clar. Well! well! I'll suppose you both as fit for one another as a couple of tallies. But, still, my dear, you know there's a surly old father's command against you; he is in articles to marry you to another: And tho' I know love is a notable contriver, I can't see how you'll get over that difficulty.

Syl. 'Tis a terrible one, I own; but with a little of your assistance, dear Clarinda, I am still in hopes to bring it to an even wager, I prove as wise as my father.

Clar. Nay, you may be sure of me: You may see by the management of my own amours, I have so natural a compassion for disobedience, I sha'nt be able to refuse
 you

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you any thing in distress.—There's my hand;—tell me how I can serve you?

Syl. Why thus:—Because I wou'd not wholly discover myself to him at once, I have sent him a note to visit me here, as if these lodgings were my own.

Clar. Hither! to my lodgings! 'Twas well I sent Col. Standfast word I should not be at home. [*Aside.*

Syl. I hope you'll pardon my freedom, since one end of my taking it too, was to have your opinion of him before I engage any farther.

Clar. O! it needs no apology; any thing of mine is at your service.—I am only afraid, my troublesome lover Mr. Clerimont shou'd happen to see him, who is of late so impertinently jealous of a rival, though from what cause I know not—not but I lye too. [*Aside.* I say, shou'd he see him, your country gentleman wou'd be in danger, I can tell you.

Syl. O! there's no fear of that; for I have order'd him to be brought in the back way: When I have talk'd with him a little alone, I'll find an occasion to leave him with you; and then we'll compare our opinions of him.

Enter servant to Clarinda.

Serv. Madam, my Lady Sadlife. [*Exit.*

Syl. Pshaw! she here!

Clar. Don't be uneasy; she shan't disturb you: I'll take care of her.

Enter Lady Sadlife.

Lady Sad. O, my dears, you have lost the sweetest morning sure, that ever peep'd out of the firmament. The park never was in such perfection.

Clar. 'Tis always so when your ladyship's there.

Lady Sad. 'Tis never so without my dear Clarinda.

Syl. How civilly we women hate one another! [*Aside.* Was there a good deal of company, madam?

Lady Sad. Abundance! and the best I have seen this season: for 'twas between twelve and one, the very hour you know when the mob are violently hungry. O! the air was so inspiring! so amorous! And, to complete the pleasure, I was attack'd in conversation by the most charming, modest, agreeably insinuating young fellow, sure, that ever woman play'd the fool with.

Clar.

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Clar. Who was it?

Lady Sad. Nay, Heav'n knows; his face is as entirely new as his conversation. What wretches our young fellows are to him?

Syl. What sort of a person?

Lady Sad. Tall, streight, well-limb'd, walk'd firm; and a look as chearful as a May-day morning.

Syl. The picture's very like: Pray Heav'n it is not my gentleman's. [Aside.]

Clar. I wish this don't prove my colonel. [Aside.]

Syl. How came you to part with him so soon?

Lady Sad. O name it not! that eternal damper of all pleasure, my husband, Sir Solomon, came into the Mall in the very crisis of our conversation—I saw him at a distance, and complain'd that the air grew tainted, that I was sick o'th' sudden, and left him in such abruptness and confusion, as if he had been himself my husband.

Clar. A melancholy disappointment, indeed!

Lady Sad. Oh! 'tis a husband's nature to give 'em.

A servant enters and whispers Sylvia.

Syl. Desire him to walk in—cousin, you'll be at hand.

Clar. In the next room—come, madam, Sylvia has a little business. I'll shew you some of the sweetest, prettiest figur'd china.—

Lady Sad. My dear, I wait on you.

[Exit Lady Sad. and Clar.]

Enter Atall, as Mr. Freeman.

Syl. You find, sir, I have kept my word in seeing you; 'tis all you yet have asked of me; and when I know 'tis in my power to be more obliging, there's nothing you can command in honour I shall refuse you.

At. This generous offer, madam, is so high an obligation, that it were almost mean in me to ask a farther favour. But 'tis a lover's merit to be a miser in his wishes, and grasp at all occasions to enrich 'em.—I own I feel your charms too sensibly prevail, but dare not give a loose to my ambitious thoughts, 'till I have pass'd one dreadful doubt that shakes 'em.

Syl. If 'tis in power to clear it, ask me freely.

At. I tremble at the trial; and yet methinks my fears are vain: But yet to kill or cure 'em once for ever, be just and tell me; are you married?

If

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Syl. If that can make you easy, no.

At. 'Tis ease indeed—nor are you promis'd, nor your heart engag'd?

Syl. That's hard to tell you: But to be just, I own my father has engag'd my person to one I never saw, and my heart I fear's inclining to one he never saw.

At. O yet be merciful, and ease my doubt; tell me the happy man that has deserv'd so exquisite a blessing.

Syl. That, sir, requires some pause: First tell me why you're so inquisitive, without letting me know the condition of your own heart.

At. In every circumstance my heart's the same with yours; 'tis promis'd to one I never saw, by a commanding father, who, by my firm hopes of happiness, I am resolv'd to disobey, unless your cruelty prevents it.

Syl. But my disobedience would beggar me.

At. Banish that fear. I'm heir to a fortune will support you like yourself—May I not know your family?

Syl. Yet you must not.

At. Why that nicety? Is not it in my power to enquire whose house this is when I am gone?

Syl. And be never the wiser: These lodgings are a friend's, and are only borrowed on this occasion: But, to save you the trouble of any further needless questions, I will make you one proposal. I have a young lady here within, who is the only confidant of my engagements to you: On her opinion I rely; nor can you take it ill, if I make no farther steps without it: 'Twould be miserable indeed shou'd we both meet beggars. I own your actions and appearance merit all you can desire; let her be as well satisfy'd of your pretensions, and condition, and you shall find it sha'n't be a little fortune shall make me ungrateful.

At. So generous an offer exceeds my hopes.

Syl. Who's there? [Enter servant.

Desire my cousin Clarinda to walk in.

At. Ha! Clarinda! if it should be my Clarinda now, I'm in a sweet condition—by all that's terrible the very she; this was finely contriv'd of fortune.

Enter Clarinda.

Clar. Defend me! Col. Standfast! she has certainly discover'd my affairs with him, and has a mind to insult

me

me by an affected resignation of her pretensions to him—*I'll disappoint her, I won't know him.*

Syl. Cousin, pray, come forward; this is the gentleman I am so much oblig'd to—*fir*, this lady is a relation of mine, and the person we are speaking of.

At. I shall be proud to be better known among any of your friends. [*Salutes her.*]

Clar. Soh! he takes the hint, I see, and seems not to know me neither: I know not what to think.—I am confounded! I hate both him and her. How unconcern'd he looks! confusion! he addresses her before my face. [*Aside.*]

Lady Sadlife peeping in.

Lady Sad. What do I see? The pleasant young fellow that talk'd with me in the park just now! This is the luckiest accident! I must know a little more of him.

[*Retires.*]

Syl. Cousin, and Mr. Freeman—I think I need not make any apology—you both know the occasion of my leaving you together—in a quarter of an hour I'll wait on you again. [*Exit Syl.*]

At. So, I'm in a hopeful way now, faith; but buff's the word: I'll stand it.

Clar. Mr. Freeman! So, my gentleman has chang'd his name too! How harmless he looks—I have my senses sure, and yet the demureness of that face looks as if he had a mind to persuade me out of 'em. I could find in my heart to humour his assurance, and see how far he'll carry it—Won't you please to sit, *fir*? [*They sit.*]

At. What the devil can this mean?—Sure she has a mind to counterface me, and not know me too—With all my heart: If her ladyship won't know me, I'm sure 'tis not my business at this time to know her. [*Aside.*]

Clar. Certainly that face is a cannon proof. [*Aside.*]

At. Now for a formal speech, as if I had never seen her in my life before. [*Aside.*] Madam—a hem! Madam,—I—a hem!

Clar. Curse of that steady face. [*Aside.*]

At. I say, madam, since I am an utter stranger to you I am afraid it will be very difficult for me to offer you more arguments than one to do me a friendship with your cousin; but if you are, as she seems to own you her real friend, I presume you can't give her a better proof

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proof of your being so, than pleading the cause of a sincere and humble lover, whose tender wishes never can propose to taste of peace in life without her.

Clar. Umph! I'm chok'd. [*Aside.*]

At. She gave me hopes, that when I had satisfied you of my birth and fortune, you wou'd do me the honour to let me know her name and family.

Clar. Sir, I must own you are the most perfect master of your art, that ever enter'd the lists of assurance.

At. Madam!

Clar. And I don't doubt but you'll find it a much easier task to impose upon my cousin, than me.

At. Impose, madam! I should be sorry any thing I have said could disoblige you into such hard thoughts of me: Sure madam, you are under some misinformation.

Clar. I was indeed, but now my eyes are open—for 'till this minute I never knew that the gay Col. Standfast, was the demure Mr. Freeman.

At. Col. Standfast! This is extremely dark, madam.

Clar. This jest is tedious, sir—impudence grows dull, when 'tis so very extravagant.

At. Madam, I am a gentleman — but not yet wise enough, I find, to account for the humours of a fine lady.

Clar. Troth, sir, on second thoughts I begin to be a little better reconcil'd to your assurance; 'tis in some sort modesty to deny yourself; for to own your perjuries to my face, had been an insolence transcendently provoking.

At. Really, madam, my not being able to apprehend one word of all this is a great inconvenience to my affair with your cousin: But if you will first do me the honour to make me acquainted with her name and family, I don't much care if I do take a little pains afterwards to come to a right understanding with you.

Clar. Come! come! since you see this assurance will do you no good, you had better put on a simple look, and generously confess your frailties: The same slyness that deceiv'd me first, will still find me woman enough to pardon you.

At. That bite won't do. [*Aside.*] Sure, madam, you mistake me for some other person!

Clar.

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Clar. Insolent! audacious villain! I am not to have my senses then!

At. No. [Aside.]

Clar. And you are resolv'd to stand it to the last!

At. The last extremity. [Aside.]

Clar. Well, sir, since you are so much a stranger to Colonel Standfast, I'll tell you where to find him, and tell him this from me; I hate him, scorn, detest, and loath him: I never meant him but at best for my diversion, and should he ever renew his dull addresses to me, I'll have him used as his vain insolence deserves. Now, sir, I have no more to say, and I desire you would leave the house immediately.

At. I would not willingly disoblige you, madam, but 'tis impossible to stir 'till I have sent your cousin, and clear'd myself of these strange aspersions.

Clar. Don't flatter yourself, sir, with so vain a hope, for I must tell you once for all, you've seen the last of her: And if you won't be gone, you'll oblige me to have you forc'd away.

At. I'll be even with you. [Aside.] Well, madam, since I find nothing can prevail upon your cruelty, I'll take my leave: But as you hope for justice on the man that wrongs you, at least be faithful to your lovely friend. And when you have nam'd to her my utmost guilt, yet paint my passion as it is, sincere. Tell her what tortures I endur'd in this severe exclusion from her sight, that 'till my innocence is clear to her, and she again receives me into mercy.

A madman's frenzy's heav'n to what I feel;
The wounds you give 'tis she alone can heal. [Exit.]

Clar. Most abandon'd impudence! And yet I know not which vexes me most, his out-facing my senses, or his insolent owning his passion for my cousin to my face: 'Tis impossible she cou'd put him upon this, it must be all his own; but be it as it will, by all that's woman I'll have revenge. [Exit.]

Re-enter Atall and Lady Sadlife at the other side.

At. Hey-dey! is there no way down stairs here? death! I can't find my way out! This is the oddest house.

Lady Sad. Here he is—I'll venture to pass by him.

At. Pray, madam, which is the nearest way out?

Lady

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Lady Sad. Sir! out——a——

At. O my stars! is't you, madam, this is fortunate indeed—I beg you'll tell me, do you live here, madam?

Lady Sad. Not very far off, fir: But this is no place to talk with you alone—indeed I must beg your pardon.

At. By all those kindling charms that fire my soul, no consequence on earth shall make me quit my hold, till you've given me some kind assurance that I shall see you again, and speedily: I'gad I'll have one out of the family at least.

Lady Sad. O good, here's company!

At. O do not rack me with delays, but quick, before this dear short-liv'd opportunity's lost, inform me where you live, or kill me: To part with this soft white hand is ten thousand daggers to my heart.

[*Kissing it eagerly.*]

Lady Sad. O lud! I am going home this minute: And if you shou'd offer to dog my chair, I protest I——was ever such usage——lord——sure! oh——follow me down then.

[*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter Clarinda, and Sylvia.

Syl. Ha! ha! ha!

Clar. Nay, you may laugh, madam, but what I tell you is true.

Syl. Ha! ha! ha!

Clar. You don't believe then?

Syl. I do believe, that when some women are inclin'd to like a man, nothing more palpably discovers it, than their railing at him; ha! ha!——Your pardon, cousin; you know you laugh'd at me just now upon the same occasion.

Clar. The occasion's quite different, madam; I hate him. And, once more I tell you, he's a villain, you're impos'd on. He's a colonel of foot, his regiment's now in Spain, and his name's Standfast.

Syl. But pray, good cousin, whence had you this intelligence of him?

Clar. From the same place that you had your false account, madam, his own mouth.

Syl. What was his business with you?

Clar. Much about the same, as his business with you——love,

Syl.

Syl. Love! to you!

Clar. Me, madam! Lord! What am I? Old! or a monster! Is it so prodigious that a man should like me?

Syl. No! but I'm amaz'd to think, if he had lik'd you, he shou'd leave you so soon, for me!

Clar. For you! leave me for you! No, madam, I did not tell you that neither! ha! ha!

Syl. No! What made you so violently angry with him then? Indeed, cousin, you had better take some other fairer way; this artifice is much too weak to make me break with him. But, however, to let you see I can be still a friend; prove him to be what you say he is, and my engagements with him shall soon be over.

Clar. Look you, madam, not but I slight the tenderest of his addressees; but to convince you that my vanity was not mistaken in him, I'll write to him by the name of Col. Standfast, and do you the same by that of Freeman; and let's each appoint him to meet us at my Lady Sadlife's at the same time: If these appear two different men, I think our dispute's easily at an end; if but one, and he does not own all I've said of him to your face, I'll make you a very humble curt'sy, and beg your pardon.

Syl. And if he does own it, I'll make your ladyship the same reverence, and beg yours.

Enter Clerimont.

Clar. Pshaw! he here!

Cler. I am glad to find you in such good company, madam.

Clar. One's seldom long in good company, sir.

Cler. I am sorry mine has been so troublesome of late; but I value your ease at too high a rate, to disturb it; [Going.]

Syl. Nay, Mr. Clerimont, upon my word you shan't stir. Hark you—[*Whispers.*] Your pardon, cousin.

Clar. I must not lose him neither—Mr. Clerimont's way is, to be severe in his construction of people's meaning.

Syl. I'll write my letter, and be with you, cousin. [Ex.]

Cler. It was always my principle, madam, to have an humble opinion of my merit; when a woman of sense frowns upon me, I ought to think I deserve it.

Clar.

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Clar. But to expect to be always receiv'd with a smile, I think, is having a very extraordinary opinion of one's merit.

Cler. We differ a little as to fact, madam: For these ten days past, I have had no distinction, but a severe reservedness. You did not use to be so sparing of your good-humour; and while I see you gay to all the world but me, I can't but be a little concern'd at the change.

Clar. If he has discover'd the colonel now, I'm undone! he cou'd not meet him, sure.—I must humour him a little. [*Aside.*] Men of your sincere temper, Mr. Clerimont, I own, don't always meet with the usage they deserve: but women are giddy things, and had we no errors to answer for, the use of good-nature in a lover wou'd be lost. Vanity is our inherent weakness: You must not chide, if we are sometimes fonder of your passions than your prudence.

Cler. This friendly condescension makes me more your slave than ever. O! yet be kind, and tell me, have I been tortur'd with a groundless jealousy?

Clar. Let your own heart be judge ——— but don't take it ill if I leave you now—I have some earnest business with my cousin Sylvia:—But to-night at my Lady Dainty's I'll make you amends; you'll be there.

Cler. I need not promise you.

Clar. Your servant.—Ah! how easily is poor sincerity impos'd on! Now for the colonel. [*Aside.*

[*Exit.*

Cler. This unexpected change of humour more stirs my jealousy than all her late severity.—I'll watch her close.

For she that from a just reproach is kind,
Gives more suspicion of her guilty mind, } [*blind.* }
And throws her smiles, like dust, to strike the lover }

[*Exit.*

ACT III. SCENE Lady Dainty's apartment:
A table, with phials, gallipots, glasses, &c.

Lady Dainty, and Situp her woman.

Lady D. **S**ITUP! Situp!
Sit. Madam!

Lady D. Thou art strangely flow; I told thee the hartshorn; I have the vapours to that degree.——

Sit. If your ladyship would take my advice you shou'd e'en fling your phyfic out of the window; if you were not in perfect health in three days, I'd be bound to be sick for you.

Lady D. Peace, goody impertinence! I tell thee, no woman of quality is, or shou'd be in perfect health—Huh! huh! [*Coughs faintly.*] To be always in health is as vulgar as to be always in humour, and wou'd equally betray one's want of wit and breeding;—where are the fellows?

Sit. Here, madam—— [*Enter two footmen.*

Lady D. Cæsar!—run to my Lady Roundfides; desire to know how she rested; and tell her the violence of my cold is abated: Huh! huh! Pompey, step you to my Lady Killchairman's; give my service; say, I have been so embarras'd with the spleen all this morning, that I am under the greatest uncertainty in the world, whether I shall be able to stir out, or no—And, d'ye hear! desire to know how my lord does, and the new monkey—— [*Exeunt footmen.*

Sit. In my conscience, these great ladies make themselves sick to make themselves business; and are well or ill, only in ceremony to one another. [*Aside.*

Lady D. Where's t'other fellow?

Sit. He is not return'd yet, madam.

Lady D. 'Tis indeed a strange lump, not fit to carry a disease to any body; I sent him t'other day to the dutchefs of Diet-Drink with the colic, and the brute put it into his own tramontane language, and call'd it the belly-ach:——

Sit. I wish your ladyship had not occasion to send for ny, for my part——

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Lady D. Thy part?—pr'ythee! thou wert made of the rough masculine kind;—'tis betraying our sex not to be sickly and tender.—All the families I visit, have something deriv'd to 'em from the elegant nice state of indisposition; you see, even in the men, a genteel, as it were, stagger, or twine of the bodies; as if they were not yet confirm'd enough for the rough laborious exercise of walking, 'a lazy saunter in their motion, ' something so quality! and their voices so soft and ' low, you'd think they were falling asleep, they are so ' very delicate.

Sit. But methinks, madam, it wou'd be better if ' the men were not altogether so tender.

Lady D. Indeed, I have sometimes wish'd the creatures were not, but that the niceness of their frame so ' much distinguishes 'em from the herd of common ' people: ' Nay, ev'n most of their diseases, you see, are not prophan'd by the crowd: The *apoplexy*, the gout, and vapours, are all peculiar to the nobility.—Huh! huh! and I could almost wish, that colds were only our's;—there's something in 'em so genteel,—so agreeably disordering—huh! huh!

Sit. That, I hope, I shall never be fit for 'em—Your ladyship forgot the spleen.

Lady D. Oh!—my dear spleen,—I grudge that ev'n to some of us.

Sit. I knew an ironmonger's wife, in this city, that was mightily troubled with it.

Lady D. Foh! What a creature hast thou nam'd! An ironmonger's wife have the spleen! Thou might'st as well have said her husband was a fine gentleman—give me something.

Sit. Will your ladyship please to take any of the steel drops? or the bolus? or the electuary? or—

Lady D. This wench will smother me with questions,—huh! huh! bring any of 'em—these healthy sluts are so boisterous, they split one's brains: I fancy myself in an inn while she talks to me—I must have some decay'd person of quality about me: For the commons of England are the strangest creatures—huh! huh!

Enter Servant.

Ser. Mrs. Sylvia, madam, is come to wait upon your ladyship.

Lady D. Desire her to walk in;—let the physic alone:—I'll take a little of her company; she's mighty good for the spleen.

Enter Sylvia.

Syl. Dear Lady Dainty!

Lady D. My good creature, I'm over-joy'd to see you——huh! huh!

Syl. I am sorry to see your ladyship wrapt up thus; I was in hopes to have had your company to the Indian house.

Lady D. If any thing could tempt me abroad, 'twou'd be that place, and such agreeable company; but how came you, dear Sylvia, to be reconcil'd to any thing in an Indian house? you us'd to have a most barbarous inclination for our own odious manufactures.

Syl. Nay, madam, I am only going to recruit my tea-table: As to the rest of their trumpery, I am as much out of humour with it as ever.

Lady D. Well thou art a pleasant creature, thy distaste is so diverting.

Syl. And your ladyship is so expensive, that really I am not able to come into it.

Lady D. Now it is to me prodigious! how some women can muddle away their money upon houswifery, children, books, and charities, when there are so many well-bred ways, and foreign curiosities, that more elegantly require it—I have every morning the rarities of all countries brought to me, and am in love with every new thing I see.—Are the people come yet, Situp?

Sit. They have been below, madam, this half hour.

Lady D. Dispose 'em in the parlour, and we'll be there presently. [Exit Sit.]

Syl. How can your ladyship take such pleasure in being cheated with the bawbles of other countries?

Lady D. Thou art a very infidel to all finery.

Syl. And you are a very bigot——

Lady D. A person of all reason, and no complaisance.

Syl. And your ladyship all complaisance, and no reason.

Lady D. Follow me, and be converted.

[Exeunt.
Re-enter

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Re-enter Situp, a woman with china ware; an Indian Man with screens, tea, &c. a Birdman with a parquet, monkey, &c.

Sit. Come! come into this room.

Chi. I hope your ladyship's lady won't be long in coming.

Sir. I don't care if she never comes to you.—It seems you trade with the ladies for old cloaths, and give 'em china for their gowns and petticoats, I'm like to have a fine time on't with such creatures as you indeed!

Chi. Alas! madam, I'm but a poor woman, and am forc'd to do any thing to live: Will your ladyship be pleas'd to accept of a piece of china?

Sit. Puh! no;—I don't care.—Though I must needs say you look like an honest woman. [*Looks on it.*]

Chi. Thank you, good madam.

Sir. Our places are like to come to a fine pass indeed, if our ladies must buy their china with our perquisites: At this rate, my lady sha'n't have an old fan, or a glove; but——

Chi. Pray, madam, take it.

Sit. No, not I; I won't have it, especially without a saucer to't. Here, take it again.

Chi. Indeed you shall accept of it.

Sit. Not I, truly—come, give it me, give it me; here's my lady.

Enter Lady Dainty and Sylvia.

Lady D. Well, my dear, is not this a pretty sight now?

Syl. It's better than so many doctors and apothecaries, indeed.

Lady D. All trades must live you know; and those no more than these could subsist, if the world were all wise, or healthy.

Syl. I'm afraid our real diseases are but few to our imaginary, and doctors get more by the sound than the sickly.

Lady D. My dear, you're allowed to say any thing—but now I must talk with the people.—Have you got any thing new there?

Chi.

Ind.

Bird.

} Yes, an't please your ladyship.

Lady

Lady D. One at once.—

Bird. I have brought your ladyship the finest monkey.—

Syl. What a filthy thing it is!

Lady D. I now think he looks very humorous and agreeable—I vow in a white perriwig he might do mischief; could he but talk and take snuff, there's ne'er a fop in town would go beyond him.

Syl. Most fops would go farther if they did not speak; but talking, indeed, makes 'em very often worse company than monkeys.

Lady D. Thoa pretty little picture of man—How very Indian he looks! I cou'd kiss the dear creature.

Syl. Ah! don't touch him, he'll bite.

Bird. No, madam, he is the tamest you ever saw, and the least mischievous.

Lady D. Then take him away, I won't have him, for mischief is the wit of a monkey, and I wou'd not give a farthing for one that wou'd not break me three or four pounds worth of china in a morning. O! I am in love with these Indian figures—do but observe what an innocent natural simplicity there is in all the actions of 'em.

Chi. These are pagods, madam, that the Indians worship.

Lady D. So far I am an Indian.

Syl. Now to me they are all monsters.

Lady D. Profane creature!

Chi. Is your ladyship for a piece of right Flanders lace?

Lady D. Um—no, I don't care for it now it is not prohibited.

Ind. Will your ladyship be pleas'd to have a pound of fine tea?

Lady D. What! filthy odious bohea, I suppose.

Ind. No madam, right Kappakawawa.

Lady D. Well, there's something in the very sound of that name, that makes it irresistible—What is't a pound?

Ind. But six guineas, madam.

Lady D. How infinitely cheap! I'll buy it all. Sit up, take the man in and pay him, and let the rest call again to-morrow.

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Omnes. Bless your ladyship.

[*Exeunt* Sit. Chi. Ind. and Bird.

Lady D. Lord! how feverish I am—the least motion does so disorder me—do but feel me.

Syl. No really, I think you are in very good temper!

Lady D. Burning indeed, child.

Enter Servant, Doctor and Apothecary.

Serv. Madam, here's Doctor Bolus and the Apothecary. [Exit.

Lady D. Oh! doctor, I'm glad you're come, one is not sure of a moment's life without you.

Dr. How did your ladyship rest, madam?

[*Feels her pulse.*

Lady D. Never worse, indeed, doctor: I once fell into a little slumber indeed, but then was disturb'd by the most odious frightful dream; that if the fright had not waken'd me, I had certainly perished in my sleep with the apprehension.

Dr. A certain sign of a disorder'd brain, madam; but I'll order something that shall compose your ladyship.

Lady D. Mr. Rhubarb, I must quarrel with you—you don't disguise your medicines enough, they taste all physie.

Rhub. To alter it more might offend the operation, madam.

Lady D. I don't care what is offended, so my taste is not.

Dr. Hark you, Mr. Rhubarb, withdraw the medicine rather than to make it pleasant; I'll find a reason for the want of it's operation.

Rhub. But, sir, if we don't look about us she'll grow well upon our hands.

Dr. Never fear that, she's too much a woman of quality to dare to be well without her doctor's opinion.

Rhub. Sir, we have drain'd the whole catalogue of diseases already, there is not another left to put in her head.

Dr. Then I'll make her go 'em over again.

Enter Careless.

Care. So! here's the old levee! doctor and apothecary in close consultation: Now will I demolish the quack and his medicines before her face—Mr. Rhubarb,

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barb, your servant, pray what have you got in your hand there?

Rhub. Only a julep and composing draught for my lady, sir.

Care. Have you so, sir—pray let me see—I'll prescribe to-day—doctor, you may go—the lady shall take no physic at present but me.

Dr. Sir—

Care. Nay, if you won't believe me—

[*Breaks the phials.*]

Lady D. Ah!—[*Frighted and leaning upon Syl.*]

Dr. Come away, Mr. Rhubarb—he'll certainly put her out of order, and then she'll send for us again.

[*Ex. Doctor and Apoth.*]

Care. You see, madam, what pains I take to come into your favour.

Lady D. You take a very preposterous way I can tell you, sir.

Care. I can't tell how I succeed, but I am sure I endeavour right, for I study every morning new impertinence to entertain you; for since I find nothing but dogs, doctors, and monkies are your favourites, it's very hard if your ladyship won't admit me as one of the number.

Lady D. When I find you of an equal merit with my monkey, you shall be in the same state of favour: I confess, as a proof of your wit, you have done me as much mischief here: But you have not half pug's judgment, nor his spirit; for the creature will do a world of pleasant things, without caring whether one likes 'em or not.

Care. Why truly, madam, the little gentleman, my rival, I believe is much in the right on't; and if you observe, I have taken as much pains of late to disoblige, as to please you.

Lady D. You succeed better in one than t'other, I can tell you, sir.

Care. I am glad on't—for if you had not me now and then to plague you, what would you do for a pretence to be chagreen, to faint, have the spleen, the vapours, and all those modish disorders that so nicely distinguish a woman of quality?

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Lady D. I am perfectly confounded! Certainly there are some people too impudent for our resentment.

Care. Modesty's a starving virtue, madam, an old threadbare fashion of the last age, and would sit as oddly upon a lover now as a picked beard and mustachios.

Lady D. Most astonishing!

Care. I have try'd fighting and looking silly a great while, but 'twou'd not do—nay, had you had as little wit as good-nature, should have proceeded to dance and sing—Tell me but how, what face or form can worship you, and behold your votary?

Lady D. Not, sir, as the Persians do the sun, with your face towards me: The best proof you can give me of your horrid devotion, is never to see me more. Come, my dear.

[*Exit with Sylvia.*]

Syl. I'm amaz'd so much assurance shou'd not succeed.

[*Exit.*]

Care. All this sha'n't make me out of love with my virtue—Impudence has ever been a successful quality—and 'twou'd be hard indeed if I shou'd be the first that did not thrive by it.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE, Clerimont's lodgings.

Enter Atall, and Finder his man.

At. You are sure you know the house again?

Fin. Ah! as well as I do the upper gallery, sir;—'Tis Sir Solomon Sadlife's, at the two glass lanthorns, within three doors of my Lord Duke's.

At. Very well, sir, then take this letter, enquire for my Lady Sadlife's woman, and stay for an answer.

Fin. Yes, sir.

[*Exit.*]

At. Well, I find 'tis as ridiculous to propose pleasure in love without variety of mistresses, as to pretend to be a keen sportsman without a good stable of horses: How this lady may prove I can't tell, but if she is not a deedy tit at the bottom, I'm no jockey.

Re-enter Finder.

Fin. Sir, here are two letters for you.

At. Who brought 'em?

Fin. A couple of footmen, and they both desire an answer.

At. Bid 'em stay, and do you make haste where I order'd you.

Fin.

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Pin. Yes, sir.

[*Exit.*

At. To Col. Standfast—that's Clarinda's hand—To Mr. Freeman—that must be my incognita. Ah! I have most mind to open this first: but if t'other malicious creature shou'd have perverted her growing inclination to me, 'twou'd put my whole frame in a trembling. Hold, I'll guess my fate by degrees—this may give me a glimpse of it. [*Reads Clar. letter*] Um—um—um—ha! to meet her at my Lady Sadlife's at seven o'clock to-night, and take no manner of notice of my late disowning myself to her—something's at the bottom of all this—now to solve the riddle. [*Reads i'other letter.*] My cousin Clarinda has told some things of you that very much alarm me; but I am willing to suspend my belief of them till I see you, which I desire may be at my Lady Sadlife's at seven this evening. [The devil! the same place!] As you value the real friendship of your incognita.

So now the riddle's out, the rival queens are fairly come to a reference, and one or both of them I must lose, that's positive!—Hard!

Enter Clerimont.

Hard fortune! Now, poor impudence, what will become of thee? O Clerimont! such a complication of adventures since I saw thee, such sweet hopes, fears and unaccountable difficulties, sure never poor dog was surrounded with.

Cler. O! you are an industrious person, you'll get over 'em. But pray let's hear.

At. To begin then in the climax of my misfortunes: in the first place, the private lodgings that my *Incognita* appointed to receive me in, prove to be the very individual habitation of my other mistress, whom (to complete the blunder of my ill luck) she civilly introduced in person to recommend me to her better acquaintance.

Cler. Ha! ha! death! how cou'd you stand 'em both together?

At. The old way——buff——I stuck like a burr to my name of Freeman, address'd my incognita before the other's face, and with a most unmov'd good-breeding, harmlessly faced her down I had never seen her in my life before.

Cler. The prettiest modesty I ever heard of. Well, but how did they discover you at last?

B 4

At.

At. Why faith, the matter's yet in suspense, and I find by both their letters that they don't yet well know what to think; (but to go on with my luck) you must know they have since both appointed me, by several names, to meet 'em at one and the same place at seven o'clock this evening.

Cler. Ah!

At. And lastly to crown my fortune, (as if the devil himself most triumphantly rode a straddle upon my ruin) the fatal place of their appointment happens to be the very house of a third lady, with whom I made an acquaintance since morning, and had just before sent word I wou'd visit near the same hour this evening.

Cler. O! murder! poor Atall! thou art really fallen under the last degree of compassion.

At. And yet with a little of thy assistance, in the middle of their small shot, I don't still despair of holding my head above water.

Cler. Death! but you can't meet 'em both, you must lose one of 'em, unless you can split yourself.

At. Pr'ythee don't suspect my courage or my modesty, for I'm resolv'd to go on, if you will stand by me.

Cler. Faith, my very curiosity would make me do that—but what can I do?

At. You must appear for me upon occasion in person.

Cler. With all my heart—What else?

At. I shall want a Queen's messenger in my interest, or rather one that can personate one.

Cler. That's easily found—but what to do?

At. Come along, and I'll tell you—for first I must answer their letters.

Cler. Thou art an original, faith.

[*Exeunt.*]

The SCENE changes to Sir Solomon's.

Enter Sir Solomon leading Lady Sadlife, and Wishwell her woman.

Sir Sol. There, madam, let me have no more of these airings—no good, I'm sure, can keep a woman five or six hours abroad in a morning.

Lady Sad. You deny me all the innocent freedoms of life.

Sir Sol. Hah! you have the modish cant of this end of this town, I see: intriguing, gaming, gadding, and party-

party-quarries with a pox to 'em, are innocent freedoms, forsooth!

Lady Sad. I don't know what you mean; I'm sure I have not one acquaintance in the world that does an ill thing.

Sir Sol. They must be better look'd after than your ladyship then; but I'll mend my hand as fast as I can: do you look to your reputation henceforward, and I'll take care of your person.

Lady Sad. You wrong my virtue with these unjust suspicions.

Sir Sol. Ay, it's no matter for that; better I wrong it than you. I'll secure my doors for this day at least. [Exit.]

Lady Sad. O! Wishwell! what shall I do?

Wish. What's the matter, madam?

Lady Sad. I expect a letter from a gentleman every minute, and if it shou'd fall into Sir Solomon's hands, I'm ruin'd past redemption.

Wish. He won't suspect it, madam, sure, if they are directed to me, as they used to be.

Lady Sad. But his jealousy's grown so violent of late, there's no trusting to it now; if he meets it I shall be lock'd up for ever.

Wish. O dear, madam! I vow your ladyship frights me —— Why, he'll kill me for keeping counsel.

Lady Sad. Run to the window, quick, and watch the messenger. [Exit Wish.] Ah! there's my ruin near. —— I feel it——[A knocking at the door.] What shall I do?——Be very insolent, or very humble, and cry. I have known some women upon these occasions, outstrut their husband's jealousy, and make 'em ask pardon for finding 'em out——O lud! here he comes —— I can't do't, my courage fails me——I must e'en stick to my handkerchief, and trust to nature.

Re-enter Sir Solomon, taking a letter from Finder.

Sir Sol. Sir, I shall make bold to read this letter; and if you have a mind to save your bones, there's your way out.

Fin. O terrible! I sha'n't have a whole one in my skin when I come home to my master—— [Exit Finder.]

Lady Sad. [Aside.] I'm lost for ever.

Sir Sol. [Reads.] Pardon, most divine creature, the impatience of my heart; [Very well! these are her innocent freedoms!

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freedoms! ah! cockatrice!] *which languishes for an opportunity to convince you of it's sincerity* [O the tender—son of a whore!] *which nothing could relieve but the sweet hope of seeing you this evening,* [Poor lady! whose virtue I have wrong'd with unjust suspicions!]

Lady Sad. I'm ready to sink with apprehension!

Sir Sol. ——— *To-night, at seven, expect your dying* *Strephon.* [Die, and be damn'd; for I'll remove your comforter, by cutting her throat—I could find in my heart to ram his impudent letter into her windpipe—Ha! what's this!] *To Mrs. Wishwell, my Lady Sadlife's woman.*

Ad, I'm glad of it with all my heart—What a happy thing 'tis to have one's jealousy disappointed!—Now have I been cursing my poor wife for the mistaken wickedness of that trollop—'Tis well I kept my thoughts to myself: for the virtue of a wife, when wrongfully accus'd, is most unmercifully insolent—Come, I'll do a great thing—I'll kiss her, and make her amends—What's the matter, my dear, has any thing frightened you?

Lady Sad. Nothing but your hard usage.

Sir Sol. Come! come! dry thy tears, it shall be so no more—But, hark ye! I have made a discovery here—Your Wishwell I'm afraid is a slut—She has an intrigue.

Lady Sad. An intrigue! Heavens, in our family!

Sir Sol. Read there—I wish she be honest ———

Lady Sad. How! ——— if there be the least ground to think it, Sir Solomon, positively she sha'n't stay a minute in the house—Impudent creature—have an affair with a man!

Sir Sol. But hold, my dear—don't let your virtue censure too severely neither.

Lady Sad. I shudder at the thoughts of her.

Sir Sol. Patience, I say, how do we know but his courtship may be honourable?

Lady Sad. That, indeed, requires some pause.

Wish. ——— [Peeping in.] So! all's safe I see—He thinks the letter's to me—O good madam—that letter was to me the fellow says. I wonder, sir, how you cou'd serve one so; if my sweetheart shou'd hear you had open'd it, I know he wou'd not have me; so he wou'd not.

Sir

Sir Sol. Never fear that, for if he is in love with you, he's too much a fool to value being laugh'd at.

Lady Sad. If it be yours, here take your stuff; and next time bid him take better care, than to send his letters so publickly.

Wish. Yes, Madam; but now your ladyship has read it, I'd fain beg the honour of Sir Solomon to answer it for me; for I can't write.

Lady Sad. Not write!

Sir Sol. Nay, he thinks she's above that I suppose, for he calls her divine creature.—A pretty piece of divinity truly.—But come, my dear—Egad, we'll answer it for her. Here's paper—you shall do it.

Lady Sad. I, Sir Solomon! Lard, I won't write to fellows, not I—I hope he won't take me at my word. [*Aside.*

Sir Sol. Nay, you shall do it—come, 'twill get her a good husband.

Wish. Ay! Pray, good madam, do——

Sir Sol. Ah! how eager the jade is!——

Lady Sad. I can't tell how to write to any body but you, my dear.

Sir Sol. Well! well! I'll dictate then—Come, begin—

Lady Sad. Lard! this is the oddest fancy!

[*Sits to write.*

Sir Sol. Come! come! Dear sir; (for we'll be as loving as he for his ears.)

Wish. No, pray, madam, begin, Dear honey, or My dearest angel.

Lady Sad. Out! you fool! you must not be so fond—Dear sir, is very well. [*Writes.*

Sir Sol. Ay! ay! so 'tis; but these young fillies are for setting out at the top of their speed—But pr'ythee, Wishwell, what is thy lover? for the style of his letter may serve for a countess.

Wish. Sir, he's but a butler at present; but he's a good schollard, as you may see by his hand-writing; and in time may come to be a steward; and then we sha'n't be long without a coach, sir.

Lady Sad. Dear sir—what must I write next?

Sir Sol. Why——

[*Musing.*

Wish. Hoping you are in good health, as I am at this present writing.

Sir Sol. You puppy, he'll laugh at you.

Wish. I'm sure my mother us'd to begin all her letters so.

Sir Sol. And thou art ev'ry inch of thee her own daughter, that I'll say for thee.

Lady Sad. Come, I have done't [Reads.] *Dear Sir, She must have very little merit that is insensible of yours.*

Sir Sol. Very well, 'faith! write all yourself.

Wish. Ay! good madam, do; that's better than mine. — But pray, dear madam, let it end with, So I rest your dearest loving friend, till death us do part.

Lady Sad. [*Aside.*] This absurd slut will make me laugh out.

Sir Sol. But hark you, huffy; suppose now you should be a little scornful and insolent to shew your breeding, and a little ill-natur'd in it to shew your wit.

Wish. Ay, Sir! that is, if I design'd him for my gallant: but since he is to be but my husband, I must be very good-natur'd and civil before I have him; and huff him, and shew my wit after.

Sir Sol. Here's a jade for you! [*Aside.*] But why must you huff your husband, huffy?

Wish. O Sir! that's to give him a good opinion of my virtue; for you know, sir, a husband can't think one cou'd be so very domineering, if one were not very honest.

Sir Sol. 'Sbud! this fool, on my conscience, speaks the sense of the whole sex. [*Aside.*

Wish. Then, sir, I have been told, that a husband loves one the better, the more one hectors him, as a spaniel does the more one beats him.

Sir Sol. Hah! thy husband will have a blessed time on't.

Lady Sad. So! I have done.

Wish. O pray, madam, read it.

Lady Sad. [Reads.] *Dear Sir—She must have very little merit that is insensible of yours; and while you continue to love, and tell me so, expect whatever you can hope from so much wit, and such unfeigned sincerity—At the hour you mention, you will be truly welcome to your passionate—*

Wish. O! madam! it is not half kind enough; pray put in some more dears.

Sir Sol. Ay! ay! sweeten it well—let it be all syrup—with a pox to her.

Wish. Every line should have a dear sweet sir in it; so it shou'd—He'll think I don't love him else.

Sir

Sir Sol. Poor moppet!—

Lady Sad. No! no! 'tis better now—Well, what must be at the bottom to answer Strephon?

Sir Sol. Pray let her divine ladyship sign—Abigail.

Wish. No; pray, madam, put down Lipsamintha.

Sir Sol. Lipsamintha!

Lady Sad. No, come—I'll write Cælia. Here, go in and seal it.

Sir Sol. Ay, come! I'll lend you a wafer, that he may'n't wait for your divinityship.

Wish. Pshaw! you always flout one so.

[*Exeunt Sir Sol. and Wish.*

Lady Sad. So! this is luckily over.—Well! I see a woman shou'd never be discourag'd from coming off at the greatest plunge; for though I was half-dead with the fright, yet now I'm a little recovered, I find—

That apprehension does the blifs endear;

The real danger's nothing to the fear. [Exit.

ACT IV. SCENE Sir Solomon's.

Enter Lady Sadlife, Atall, and Wishwell with lights.

Lady Sad. **T**HIS room, I think, is pleasanter; if you please, we'll sit here, sir—Wishwell! shut the door, and take the key o'th' inside, and set chairs.

Wish. Yes, madam.

Lady Sad. Lard! Sir, what a strange opinion you must have of me, for receiving your visits upon so slender an acquaintance?

At. I have a much stranger opinion, madam, of your ordering your servant to lock herself in with us.

Lady Sad. O! You would not have us wait upon ourselves.

At. Really, madam, I can't conceive that two lovers alone have much occasion for attendance. [They sit.

Lady Sad. Lovers! Lard! how you talk! can't people converse without that stuff?

At. Um!—yes, madam, people may; but without a little of that stuff, conversation is generally very apt to be insipid.

Lady

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Lady Sad. Pooh! why, we can say any thing without her hearing, you see.

At. Ay! but if we shou'd talk ourselves up to an occasion of being without her, it wou'd look worse to send her out, than to have let her wait without when she was out.

Lady Sad. You are pretty hard to please, I find, sir: some men, I believe, wou'd think themselves well us'd in so free a reception as yours.

At. Hah! I see, this is like to come to nothing this time; so I'll e'en put her out of humour, that I may get off in time to my incognita. [*Aside.*] Really, madam, I can never think myself free, where my hand and my tongue are ty'd. [*Pointing to Wishwell.*]

Lady Sad. Your conversation, I find, is very different from what it was, sir.

At. With submission, madam, I think it very proper for the place we are in. If you had sent for me only to sip tea, to sit still, and be civil, with my hat under my arm, like a strange relation from Ireland, or so, why was I brought hither with so much caution and privacy?

[*Sir Solomon knocks at the door.*]

Wish. O Heav'ns! my master, madam.

Sir Sol. Open the door, there, (*within.*)

Lady Sad. What shall we do?

At. Nothing now, I'm sure.

Lady Sad. Open the door, and say the gentleman came to you.

Wish. O lud! madam, I shall never be able to manage it at so short a warning—We had better shut the gentleman into the closet, and say he came to no body at all.

Lady Sad. In! in then, for mercy's sake, quickly, sir!

At. Soh; this is like to be a very pretty business! Oh! Success and impudence! thou hast quite forsaken me.

[*Enters the closet.*]

Wish. Do you step into your bed-chamber, madam, and leave my master to me. [*Exit Lady Sad.*]

[*Wishwell opens the door, &c.*]

Enter Sir Solomon.

Sir Sol. What's the reason, mistress, I am to be lock'd out of my wife's apartment?

Wish. Sir, my lady was washing her ——— her ——— neck, sir, and I cou'd not come any sooner.

Sir

Sir Sol. I'm sure I heard a man's voice. [*Afide.*] Bid your lady come hither.—[*Exit Wishwell.*]—He must be hereabouts; 'tis so! all's out, all's over now: the devil has done his worst, and I am a cuckold in spite of my wisdom. 'Sbud! now an Italian wou'd poison his wife for this, a Spaniard wou'd stab her, and a Turk would cut off her head with a scimitar; but a poor dog of an English cuckold now, can only squabble and call names—Hold! here she comes.—I must smother my jealousy that her guilt mayn't be upon it's guard.

Enter Lady Sadlife, and Wishwell.

Sir Sol. My dear! how do you do? come hither, and kiss me.

Lady Sad. I did not expect you home so soon, my dear.

Sir Sol. Poor rogue—I don't believe you did—with a pox to you. [*Afide.*] Wishwell, go down, I have business with your lady.

Wish. Yes, sir—but I'll watch you: for I am afraid this good-humour has mischief at the bottom of it—[*Retires.*]

Lady Sad. I scarce know whether he's jealous or not.

Sir Sol. Now dare not I go near that closet door, lest the murderous dog should poke a hole in my guts thro' the key-hole.—Um—I have an old thought in my head—ay! and that will discover the whole bottom of her affair—'Tis better to seem not to know one's dishonour, when one has not courage enough to revenge it.

Lady Sad. I don't like his looks, methinks.

Sir Sol. Odsso! what have I forgot now—Pr'ythee, my dear, step into my study, for I am so weary! and in the uppermost parcel of letters, you'll find one that I receiv'd from Yorkshire to-day, in the scrutoir; bring it down, and some paper, I will answer it while I think on't.

Lady Sad. If you please to lend me your key—but had not you better write in your study, my dear?

Sir Sol. No! no! I tell you, I'm so tir'd, I am not able to walk—There! make haste.

Lady Sad. Wou'd all were well over. [*Exit Lady Sad.*]

Sir Sol. 'Tis so by her eagerness to be rid of me. Well, since I find I dare not behave myself like a man of honour in this business, I'll at least act like a person of prudence, and penetration: for say, shou'd I clap a brace of flugs now in the very bowels of this rascal, it may hang me; but if it does not, it can't divorce me:---No, I'll e'en

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put out the candles, and in a soft, gentle whore's voice, desire the gentleman to walk about his business; and if I can get him out before my wife returns, I'll fairly post myself in his room; and so, when she comes to set him at liberty, in the dark, I'll humour the cheat, 'till I draw her into some casual confession of the fact, and then this injur'd front shall bounce upon her like a thunderbolt.

[Puts out the candles.]

Wife. [Behind.] Say you so, sir? I'll take care my lady shall be provided for you. [Exit.]

Sir Sol. Hift! hift! sir! sir!

Enter Atall from the closet.

At. Is all clear? may I venture, madam?

Sir Sol. Ay! ay! quick! quick! make haste before Sir Solomon returns. A strait-back'd dog, I warrant him. [Aside.] But when shall I see you again?

At. Whenever you'll promise me to make a better use of an opportunity.

Sir Sol. Ha! then 'tis possible he may'nt yet have put the finishing stroke to me.

At. Is this the door?

Sir Sol. Ay! ay! away! [Exit Atall.] Soh! now the danger of being murder'd is over; I find my courage returns: and if I catch my wife but inclining to be no better than she shou'd be, I'm not sure that blood won't be the consequence.

[He goes into the closet and Wishwell enters.]

Wife. Soh! my lady has her cue; and, if my wife master can give her no better proofs of his penetration than this, she'd be a greater fool than he, if she shou'd not do what she has a mind to. Sir! sir! come! you may come out now; Sir Solomon's gone.

Enter Sir Solomon from the closet.

Sir Sol. So! now for a soft speech to set her impudent blood in a ferment, and then let it out with my penknife. [Aside.] Come, dear creature, now let's make the kindest use of our opportunity.

Wife. Not for the world! if Sir Solomon shou'd come again, I shou'd be ruin'd---Pray be gone---I'll send to you to-morrow.

Sir Sol. Nay, now you love me not---You would not let me part else thus unsatisfied.

Wife.

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Wish. Now you're unkind. You know I love you, or I shou'd not run such hazards for you.

Sir Sol. Fond whore! [*Aside.*] But I'm afraid you love Sir Solomon, and lay up all your tenderness for him.

Wish. O ridiculous! How can so sad a wretch give you the least uneasy thought! I loath the very sight of him!

Sir Sol. Damn'd infernal strumpet——I can bear no longer——Lights! Lights! within there.

[*Seizes her.*]

Wish. Ah! [*Sbricks.*] Who's this! help! murder!

Sir Sol. No, traitress, don't think to 'scape me; for now I've trapp'd thee in thy guilt, I cou'd find in my heart to have thee flea'd alive, thy skin stuff'd, and hung up in the middle of Guild-hall, as a terrible consequence of cuckoldom to the whole city——Lights there!

Enter Lady Sadlife with a light.

Lady Sad. O Heav'ns! what's the matter?

[*Sir Solomon looks astonish'd.*]

Ha! what do I see! my servant on the floor, and Sir Solomon offering rudeness to her! O! I can't bear it! oh!

[*Falls into a chair.*]

Sir Sol. What has the devil been doing here?

Lady Sad. This the reward of all my virtue! O revenge! revenge!

Sir Sol. My dear! my good, virtuous, injur'd dear, be patient; for here has been such wicked doings——

Lady Sad. O torture! do you own it too! 'tis well my love protects you——But for this wretch! this monster! this sword shall do me justice on her.

[*Runs at Wishwell with Sir Solomon's sword.*]

Sir Sol. O hold! my poor mistaken dear!—This horrid jade, the Gods can tell, is innocent for me; but she has had, it seems, a strong dog in the closet here: which I suspecting, put myself into his place, and had almost trapp'd her in the very impudence of her iniquity.

Lady Sad. How!—I'm glad to find he dares not own 'twas his jealousy of me——

[*Aside.*]

Wish. [*Kneeling.*] Dear madam, I hope your ladyship will pardon the liberty I took in your absence, in bringing

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bringing my lover into your ladyship's chamber; but I did not think you wou'd come home from prayers so soon, and so I was forc'd to hide him in that closet: but my master suspecting the business, it seems, turn'd him out unknown to me, and then put himself there, and so had a mind to discover whether there was any harm between us; and so besause he fancy'd I had been naught with him —

Sir Sol. Ay, my dear; and the jade was so confoundedly fond of me, that I grew out of all patience, and fell upon her like a fury.

Lady Sad. Horrid creature! and does she think to stay a minute in the family after such impudence?

Sir Sol. Hold, my dear—for if this should be the man that is to marry her—you know there may be no harm done yet.

Wish. Yes, it was he indeed, Madam.

Sir Sol [*Aside.*] I must not let the jade be turn'd away, for fear she should put it in my wife's head, that I hid myself to discover her ladyship, and then the devil wou'd not be able to live in the house with her.

Wish. Now, sir, you know what I can tell of you.

[*Aside to Sir Solomon.*]

Sir Sol. Mum! that's a good girl! there's a guinea for you.

Lady Sad. Well, upon your intercession, my dear, I'll pardon her this fault; but pray, mistress, let me hear of no more such doings. I am so disorder'd with this fright—fetch my prayer-book, I'll endeavour to compose myself.

[*Exit Lady Sad.*]

Sir Sol. Ay, do so! that's my good dear—What two blessed escapes I have had! to find myself no cuckold at last, and, which had been equally terrible, my wife not know I wrongfully suspected her.—Well! at length I am fully convinc'd of her virtue—and now if I can but cut off the abominable expence that attends some of her impertinent acquaintance, I shall shew myself a Machiavel.

Re-enter Wishwell.

Wish. Sir, here's my Lady Dainty come to wait upon my lady.

Sir Sol. I'm sorry for't with all my heart——why did you say she was within?

Wish.

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Wish. Sir, she did not ask if she was; but she's never deny'd to her.

Sir Sol. Gad so! why then, if you please to leave her ladyship to me, I'll begin with her now.

Wishwell brings in Lady Dainty.

Lady D. Sir Solomon, your very humble servant.

Sir Sol. Yours, yours, madam.

Lady D. Where's my lady?

Sir Sol. Where your ladyship very seldom is—at prayers.

Enter Lady Sadlife.

Lady Sad. My dear Lady Dainty!

Lady D. Dear madam, I am the happiest person alive in finding your ladyship at home.

Sir Sol. So! now for a torrent of impertinence.

Lady Sad. Your ladyship does me a great deal of honour.

Lady D. I am sure I do myself a great deal of pleasure: I have made at least twenty visits to-day: O! I'm quite dead! not but my coach is very easy—yet so much perpetual motion—you know.

Sir Sol. Ah, pox of your disorder—if I had the providing your equipage, ods-zooks you should rumble to your visits in a wheel-barrow. *[Aside.*

Lady Sad. Was you at my Lady Ducheſs's?

Lady D. A little while.

Lady Sad. Had she a great circle?

Lady D. Extreme—I was not able to bear the breath of so much company.

Lady Sad. You did not dine there?

Lady D. Oh! I can't touch any body's dinner but my own—and I have almost kill'd myself this week for want of my usual glass of Tokay after my Ortolans; and Muscovy duck-eggs.

Sir Sol. 'Sbud, if I had the feeding of you, I'd bring you in a fortnight to neck-beef, and a pot of plain bub. *[Aside.*

Lady D. Then I have been so surfeited with the sight of a hideous entertainment to-day at my Lady Cormorant's, who knows no other happiness, or way of making one welcome, than eating or drinking; for though she saw I was just fainting at her vast limbs of butcher's meat—yet the civil savage forc'd me to sit down, and heap'd

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heap'd enough upon my plate to victual a fleet for an East-India voyage.

Lady Sad. How cou'd you bear it? Ha! ha! Does your ladyship never go to the play?

Lady D. Never but when I bespeak it myself, and then not to mind the actors; for it's common to love fights: my great diversion is in a repos'd posture to turn my eyes upon the galleries, and bleis myself to hear the happy savages laugh—or when an aukward citizen crowds herself in among us—'tis an unspeakable pleasure to contemplate her airs and dress—And they never 'scape me—for I am as apprehensive of such a creature's coming near me, as some people are when a cat is in the room—but the play is begun, I believe, and if your ladyship has an inclination, I'll wait upon you.

Lady Sad. I think, madam, we can't do better; and here comes Mr. Careless most opportunely to squire us—

Sir Sol. Careless! I don't know him, but my wife does, and that's as well!

Enter Careless.

Care. Ladies, your servant—seeing your coach at the door, madam, made me not able to resist this opportunity to—to—you know, madam, there's no time to be lost in love. Sir Solomon, your servant—

Sir Sol. O yours! yours, sir! A very impudent fellow, and I'm in hopes will marry her. [*Aside.*

Lady D. The assurance of this creature almost grows diverting; all one can do, can't make him the least sensible of a discouragement.

Lady Sad. Try what compliance will do; perhaps that may fright him.

Lady D. If it were not too dear a remedy—one wou'd almost do any thing to get rid of his company.

Care. Which you never will, madam, till you marry me, depend upon't: do that and I'll trouble you no more.

Sir Sol. This fellow's abominable! He'll certainly have her. [*Aside.*

Lady D. There's no depending upon your word, or else I might: for the last time I saw you, you told me then you would trouble me no more.

Care. Ay, that's true, Madam; but to keep one's word, you know, looks like a tradesman.

Sir Sol. Impudent rogue! but he'll have her—[*Aside.*

Care.

Care. And is as much below a gentleman as paying one's debts.

Sir Sol. If he is not hang'd first—— [*Aside.*

Care. Besides, madam; I consider'd that my absence might endanger your constitution, which is so very tender, that nothing but love can save it, and so I wou'd e'en advise you to throw away your juleps, your cordials, and slops, and take me all at once.

Lady D. No, sir, bitter potions are not to be taken so suddenly.

Care. Oh! to choose, madam; for if you stand making of faces, and kicking against it, you'll but increase your aversion, and delay the cure. Come, come, you must be advis'd. [*Pressing her.*

Lady D. What mean you, sir?

Care. To banish all your ails, and be myself your universal medicine.

Sir Sol. Well said! he'll have her. [*Aside.*

Lady D. Impudent robust man; I protest, did not I know his family, I shou'd think his parents had not liv'd in chairs and coaches, but had us'd their limbs all their lives! Huh! huh! but I begin to be persuaded health is a great blessing. [*Aside.*

Care. My limbs, madam, were convey'd to me before the use of chairs and coaches, and it might lessen the dignity of my ancestors, not to use them as they did.

Lady D. Was ever such a rude understanding? to value himself upon the barbarism of his fore-fathers.—— Indeed I have heard of kings that were bred to the plough, and I fancy you might descend from such a race; for you court as if you were behind one——Huh! huh! huh! To treat a woman of quality like an Exchange-wench, and express your passion with your arms; unpolish'd man!

Care. I was willing, madam, to take from the vulgar the only desirable thing among 'em, and shew you—how they live so healthy—for they have no other remedy.

Lady D. A very rough medicine! huh! huh!

Care. To those that never took it, it may seem so—

Lady D. Abandon'd ravisher! Oh! [*Struggling.*

Sir Sol. He has her, he has her. [*Aside.*

Lady D. Leave the room, and see my face no more.

Care. [*Bows and is going.*]

Lady D. And, hark ye, sir, no bribe, no mediations to my woman.

Care.

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Care. [*Bows and sighs.*]

Lady D. Thou profligate! to hug! to clasp! to embrace and throw your robust arms about me, like a vulgar, and indelicate! Oh! I faint with apprehension of so gross an address. [*She faints, and Care. catches her.*

Care. O my offended fair!

Lady D. Inhuman! ravisher! oh!

[*Care. carries her off.*

Sir Sol. He has her! she's undone! He has her.

[*Ex. Sir Sol. and Lady Sad.*

Enter Clarinda and Sylvia.

Clar. Well, cousin, what do you think of your gentleman now?

Syl. I fancy, madam, that wou'd be as proper a question to ask you: for really I don't see any great reason to alter my opinion of him yet——

Clar. Now I cou'd dash her at once, and shew it her under his own hand that his name's Standfast, and he'll be here in a quarter of an hour. [*Aside.*] I vow I don't think I ought to refuse you any service in my power; therefore if you think it worth your while not to be out of countenance when the colonel comes, I would advise you to withdraw now; for if you dare take his own word for it, he will be here in three minutes, as this may convince you. [*Gives a letter.*

Syl. What's here? a letter from Colonel Standfast?——Really, cousin, I have nothing to say to him——Mr. Freeman's the person I'm concern'd for, and I expect to see him here in a quarter of an hour.

Clar. Then you don't believe them both the same person?

Syl. Not by their hands or style, I can assure you, as this may convince you. [*Gives a letter.*

Clar. Ha! The hand is different indeed——I scarce know what to think, and yet I'm sure my eyes were not deceiv'd.

Syl. Come, cousin, let's be a little cooler; 'tis not impossible but we may have both laugh'd at one another to no purpose—for I am confident they are two persons.

Clar. I can't tell that, but I'm sure here comes one of 'em.

Enter Atall as Colonel Standfast.

Syl. Ha!

At.

At. Hey! Bombard, (there they are, faith!) bid the chariot set up, and call again about one or two in the morning——You see, madam, what 'tis to give an impudent fellow the least encouragement: I'm resolv'd now to make a night on't with you.

Clar. I am afraid, colonel, we shall have much ado to be good company, for we are two women to one man, you see; and if we shou'd both have a fancy to have you particular, I doubt you'd make but bungling work on't.

At. I warrant you we will pass our time like gods: two ladies and one man; the prettiest set for Ombre in the universe——Come! come! Cards! cards! cards! and tea, that I insist upon.

Clar. Well, sir, if my cousin will make one, I won't balk your good-humour. [*Turning Syl. to face him,*

At. Is the lady your relation, madam? ——I beg the honour to be known to her.

Clar. O, sir! that I'm sure she can't refuse you——Cousin, this is Colonel Standfast. [*Laughs aside.*] I hope now she's convinc'd.

At. Your pardon, madam, if I am a little particular in my desire to be known to any of this lady's relations. [*Salutes.*

Syl. You'll certainly deserve mine, sir, by being always particular to that lady——

At. Oh, madam! Tall, lall. [*Turns away, and sings.*

Syl. This assurance is beyond example. [*Aside.*

Clar. How do you do, cousin?

Syl. Beyond bearing—but not incurable. [*Aside.*

Clar. [*Aside*] Now can't I find in my heart to give him one angry word for his impudence to me this morning; the pleasure of seeing my rival mortified makes me strangely good-natur'd.

At. [*Turning familiarly to Clar.*] Upon my soul you are provokingly handsome to-day. Ay Gad! why is not it high treason for any beautiful woman to marry?

Clar. What, wou'd you have us lead apes?

At. Not one of you by all that's lovely.——Do you think we cou'd not find you better employment? Death! what a hand is here?——Gad! I shall grow foolish!

Clar. Stick to your assurance, and you are in no danger.

At. Why then, in obedience to your commands,
prithce

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pristhee answer me sincerely one question? How long do you really design to make me dangle thus?

Clar. Why really I can't just set you a time; but when you are weary of your service, come to me with a six-pence and modesty, and I'll give you a discharge.

At. Thou insolent, provoking, handsome tyrant!

Clar. Come! let me go—this is not a very civil way of entertaining my cousin, methinks.

At. I beg her pardon indeed. [*Bowing to Sylv.*] But lovers you know, madam, may plead a sort of excuse for being singular when the favourite fair's in company. —But we were talking of cards, ladies.

Clar. Cousin, what say you?

Syl. I had rather you would excuse me, I am a little unfit for play at this time.

At. What a valuable virtue is assurance! Now am I as intrepid as a lawyer at the bar. [*Aside.*]

Clar. Bless me! you are not well?

Syl. I shall be presently—Pray, sir, give me leave to ask you a question.

At. So, now it's coming. [*Aside.*] Freely, madam.

Syl. Look on me well: have you never seen my face before?

At. Upon my word, madam, I can't recollect that I have.

Syl. I am satisfied.

At. But pray, madam, why may you ask?

Syl. I am too much disorder'd now to tell you—But if I'm not deceiv'd, I'm miserable. [*Weeps.*]

At. This is strange—How her concern transports me!

Clar. Her fears have touch'd me, and half persuade me to revenge 'em—Come, cousin, be easy: I see you are convinc'd he is the same, and now I'll prove myself a friend.

Syl. I know not what to think—my senses are confounded: their features are indeed the same; and yet there's something in their air, their dress, and manner, strangely different: but be it as it will, all right to him in presence I disclaim, and yield to you for ever.

At. O charming! joyful grief! [*Aside.*]

Clar. No, cousin, believe it, both our senses cannot be deceiv'd, he's individually the same; and since he dares be base to you, he's miserable indeed, if flatter'd

with a distant hope of me ; I know his person and his falshood both too well ; and you shall see will, as becomes your friend, resent it.

At. What means this strangeness, madam ?

Clar. I'll tell you, sir ; and to use few words, know then, this lady and myself have borne your faithless insolence and artifice too long : but that you may not think to impose on me, at least, I desire you would leave the house, and from this moment never see me more.

At. Madam ! What ! what is all this ? Riddle me riddle me re,

For the Devil take me,

For ever from thee,

If I can divine what this riddle can be !

Syl. Not mov'd ! I'm more amaz'd.

At. Pray, madam, in the name of common sense, let me know in two words what the real meaning of your last terrible speech was ; and if I don't make you a plain, honest, reasonable answer to it, be pleas'd the next minute to blot my name out of your table-book, never more to be inroll'd in the senseless catalogue of those vain coxcombs, that impudently hope to come into your favour.

Clar. This insolence grows tedious : what end can you propose by this assurance ? —

At. Hey-dey !

Syl. Hold, cousin — one moment's patience : I'll send this minute again to Mr. Freeman, and if he does not immediately appear, the dispute will need no farther argument.

At. Mr. Freeman ! Who the Devil's he ! What have I to do with him ?

Syl. I'll soon inform you, sir.

[Going, meets Wishwell entering.]

Wish. Madam, here's a footman mightily out of breath, says he belongs to Mr. Freeman, and desires very earnestly to speak with you.

Syl. Mr. Freeman ! Pray bid him come in — What can this mean ?

At. You'll see presently.

[Aside.]

Re-enter Wishwell with Finder.

Clar. Ha !

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Syl. Come hither, friend ; Do you belong to Mr. Freeman ?

Fin. Yes, madam, and my poor master gives his humble service to your ladyship, and begs your pardon for not waiting on you according to his promise ; which he would certainly have done, but for an unfortunate accident.

Syl. What's the matter ?

Fin. As he was coming out of his lodgings to pay his duty to you, madam, a parcel of fellows set upon him, and said they had a warrant against him ; and so, because the rascals began to be saucy with him, and my master knowing he did not owe a shilling in the world, he drew to defend himself, and in the scuffle the bloody villains run one of their swords quite through his arm ; but the best of the jest was, madam, that as soon as they got him into a house, and sent for a surgeon, he prov'd to be the wrong person ; for their warrant it seems was against a poor scoundrel, that happens, they say, to be very like him, one Colonel Standfast.

At. Say you so, Mr. Dog——if your master had been here I wou'd have given him as much.

[*Gives him a box on the ear.*]

Fin. O Lord ! pray, madam, save me — I did not speak a word to the gentleman——O the Devil ! this must be the Devil in the likeness of my master.

Syl. Is this gentleman so very like him, say you ?

Fin. Like, madam ! ay, as one box of the ear is to another ; only I think, madam, my master's nose is a little, little higher.

At. Now, ladies, I presume the riddle's solved—Hark you, where is your master, rascal ?

Fin. Master, rascal ! Sir, my master's name's Freeman, and I'm a free-born Englishman ; and I must tell you, sir, that I don't use to take such arbitrary socks of the face from any man that does not pay me wages ; and so my master will tell you too when he comes, sir.

Syl. Will he be here then ?

Fin. This minute, madam, he only stays to have his wound dress'd.

At. I'm resolv'd I'll stay that minute out, if he does not come till midnight.

Fin. A pox of his mettle—when his hand's in he makes no difference between jest and earnest, I find — if he does not pay me well for this, 'egad he shall tell the next for himself. [*Aside.*] Has your ladyship any commands to my master madam ?

Syl. Yes, pray give him my humble service, say I'm sorry for his misfortune ; and if he thinks 'twill do his wound no harm, I beg by all means he may be brought hither immediately.

Fin. 'Shah ! his wound, madam, I know he does not value it of a rush ; for he'll have the Devil and all of actions against the rogues for false imprisonment, and smart-money — Ladies, I kiss your hands — sir, I — nothing at all ——— [*Exit.*]

At. [*Aside.*] The dog has done it rarely ; for a lye upon the stretch I don't know a better rascal in Europe.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Ay ! now I'm sure I'm right — Is not your name Colonel Standfast, sir ?

At. Yes, sir ; what then ?

Off. Then you are my prisoner, sir ———

At. Your prisoner ! who the devil are you ? a bailiff ? I don't owe a shilling.

Off. I don't care if you don't, sir ; I have a warrant against you for high treason, and I must have you away this minute.

At. Look you, sir, depend upon't, this is but some impertinent malicious prosecution : you may venture to stay a quarter of an hour, I'm sure ; I have some business here till then that concerns me nearer than my life —.

Clar. Have but so much patience, and I'll satisfy you for your civility.

Off. I cou'd not stay a quarter of an hour, madam, if you'd give me five hundred pounds.

Syl. Can't you take bail, sir ?

Off. Bail ! no ! no !

Clar. Whither must he be carried ?

Off. To my house, 'till he's examin'd before the council.

Clar. Where is your house ?

Off. Just by the secretary's office ; every body knows Mr. Lockum the messenger—Come, sir.

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At. I can't stir yet, indeed, sir.

[Lays his hand on his sword.]

Off. Nay, look you, if you are for that play —
Come in, gentlemen, away with him.

[Enter musqueteers, and force him off.]

Syl. This is the strangest accident: I am extremely sorry for the colonel's misfortune, but I am as heartily glad he is not Mr. Freeman.

Clar. I'm afraid you'll find him so—I shall never change my opinion of him 'till I see 'em face to face.

Syl. Well, cousin, let 'em be two, or one, I'm resolv'd to stick to Mr. Freeman; for to tell you the truth, this last spark has too much of the confident rake in him to please me, but there is a modest sincerity in t'other's conversation that's irresistible.

Clar. For my part I'm almost tir'd with his impertinence either way, and cou'd find in my heart to trouble myself no more about him; and yet methinks it provokes me to have a fellow outface my senses.

Syl. Nay, they are strangely alike I own; but yet if you observe nicely, Mr. Freeman's features are more pale and pensive than the colonel's.

Clar. When Mr. Freeman comes, I'll be closer in my observation of him — in the mean time let me consider what I really propose by all this rout I make about him: suppose (which I can never believe) they should prove two several men at last, I don't find that I'm fool enough to think of marrying either of 'em; nor (whatever airs I give myself) am I yet mad enough to do worse with 'em — Well! since I don't design to come to a close engagement myself, then why should I not generously stand out of the way, and make room for one that wou'd? No, I can't do that neither — I want methinks to convict him first of being one and the same person, and then to have him convince my cousin that he likes me better than her — Ay, that wou'd do! and to confess my infirmity, I still find (though I don't care for this fellow) while she has assurance to nourish the least hope of getting him from me, I shall never be heartily easy 'till she's heartily mortified. *[Aside.]*

Syl. You seem very much concern'd for the colonel's misfortune, cousin.

Clar. His misfortunes seldom hold him long, as you may see; for here he comes. *Enter*

Enter Atall, as Mr. Freeman.

Syl. Bless me!

At. I am sorry, madam, I cou'd not be more punctual to your obliging commands : but the accident that prevented my coming sooner, will, I hope, now give me a pretence to a better welcome than my last ; for now, madam, [*to Clar.*] your mistake's set right, I presume, and I hope you won't expect Mr. Freeman to answer for all the miscarriages of Colonel Standfast.

Clar. Not in the least, sir : the colonel's able to answer for himself, I find ! ha ! ha !

At. Was not my servant with you, madam ?

[*To Sylvia.*

Syl. Yes, yes, sir, he has told us all. [*Aside.*] And I am sorry you have paid so dear for a proof of your innocence : come, come, I'd advise you to set your heart at rest ; for what I design, you'll find, I shall come to a speedy resolution in.

At. O generous resolution !

Clar. Well, madam, since you are so tenacious of your conquest, I hope you'll give me the same liberty ; and not expect, the next time you fall a crying at the colonel's gallantry to me, that my good-nature shou'd give you up my pretensions to him. And for you, sir,—I shall only tell you, this last plot was not so closely laid, but that a woman of a very slender capacity, you'll find, has wit enough to discover it.

[*Exit Clar.*

At. So ! she's gone to the messenger's, I suppose—but, poor soul, her intelligence there will be extremely small. [*Aside.*] Well, madam, I hope at last your scruples are over.

Syl. You can't blame me, sir, if, now we are alone, I own myself a little more surpris'd at her positiveness, than my Woman's pride wou'd let me confess before her face ; and yet methinks there's a native honesty in your look, that tells me I am not mistaken, and may trust you with my heart.

At. O ! for pity still preserve that tender thought, and save me from despair.

Enter Clerimont.

Cler. Ha ! Freeman again ! is it possible ?

At. How now, Clerimont, what are you surpris'd at ?

Cler. Why to see thee almost in two places at one

time; 'tis but this minute, I met the very image of thee with the mob about a coach, in the hands of a messenger, whom I had the curiosity to stop and call to; and had no other proof of his not being thee, but that the spark wou'd not know me!

Syl. Strange! I almost think I'm really not deceiv'd.

Cler. 'Twas certainly Clarinda I saw go out in a chair just now——it must be she——the circumstances are too strong for a mistake. [*Aside.*

Syl. Well, sir, to ease you of your fears, now I dare own to you, that mine are over. [*To Atall.*

Cler. What a coxcomb have I made myself, to serve my rival e'en with my own mistress? but 'tis at least some ease to know him: all I have to hope is, that he does not know the afs he has made of me—that might indeed be fatal to him. [*Aside.*

Enter Sylvia's Maid.

Maid. O, madam, I'm glad I've found you: your father and I have been hunting you all the town over.

Syl. My father in town?

Maid. He waits below in the coach for you: he must needs have you come away this minute; and talks of having you married this very night to the fine gentleman he spoke to you of.

Syl. What do I hear?

At. If ever soft compassion touch'd your soul, give me a word of comfort in this last distress, to save me from the horrors that surround me.

Syl. You see we are observ'd——but yet depend upon my faith, as on my life——in the mean time, I'll use my utmost power to avoid my father's hasty will: In two hours you shall know my fortune and my family——Now don't follow me, as you'd preserve my friendship. Come—— [*Exit with maid.*

At. Death! how this news alarms me! I never felt the pains of love before.

Cler. Now then to ease, or to revenge my fears——This sudden change of your countenance, Mr. Atall, looks as if you had a mind to banter your friend into a belief of your being really in love with the lady that just now left you.

At. Faith, Clerimont, I have too much concern upon me at this time, to be capable of a banter.

Cler.

Cler. Ha! he seems really touch'd, and I begin now only to fear Clarinda's conduct—Well, sir, if it be so, I'm glad to see a convert of you; and now, in return to the little services I have done you, in helping you to carry on your affair with both these ladies at one time, give me leave to ask a favour of you—Be still sincere, and we may still be friends.

At. You surprise me—but use me as you find me.

Cler. Have you no acquaintance with a certain lady whom you have lately heard me own I was unfortunately in love with?

At. Not that I know of, I'm sure not as the lady you are in love with: but pray, why do you ask?

Cler. Come, I'll be sincere with you too: because I have strong circumstances, that convince me 'tis one of those two you have been so busy about.

At. Not she you saw me with, I hope?

Cler. No; I mean the other—But to clear the doubt at once, is her name Clarinda?

At. I own it is: but had I the least been warn'd of your pretences——

Cler. Sir, I dare believe you; and though you may have prevail'd even against her honour, your ignorance of my passion for her makes you stand at least excus'd to me.

At. No; by all the solemn protestations tongue can utter, her honour is untainted yet for me; nay, even unattempted: 'Nor had I ever an opportunity, that cou'd encourage the most distant thought against it.'

Cler. You own she has receiv'd your gallantries at least!

At. Faith, not to be vain, she has indeed taken some pains to pique her cousin about me; and if her beautiful cousin had not fallen in my way at the same time, I must own, 'tis very possible, I might have endeavour'd to push my fortune with her; but since I now know your heart, put my friendship to a trial.

Cler. Only this—If I shou'd be reduc'd to ask it of you, promise to confess your imposture, and your passion to her cousin, before her face.

At. There's my hand,—I'll do't, to right my friend and mistress. But, dear Clerimont, you'll pardon me, if

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I leave you here: for my poor Incognita's affairs at this time are in a very critical condition.

Cler. No ceremony—I release you.—

At. Adieu.

Exeunt.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter Clerimont and Careless.

Cler. **A**ND so you took the opportunity of her fainting to carry her off! Pray, how long did her fit last?

Care. Why, faith, I so humour'd her affectation, that 'tis hardly over yet; for I told her, her life was in danger, and swore, if she wou'd not let me send for a parson to marry her before she dy'd, I'd that minute send for a shroud, and be buried alive with her in the same coffin: but at the apprehension of so terrible a thought, she pretended to be frightened into her right senses again; and forbid me her sight for ever.—So that in short, my impudence is almost exhausted, her affectation is as unfurmountable as another's real virtue, and I must e'en catch her that way, or die without her at last.

Cler. How do you mean?

Care. Why, if I find I can't impose upon her by humility, which I'll try, I'll e'en turn rival to myself in a very fantastical figure, that I'm sure she won't be able to resist, &c. You must know she has of late been flatter'd that the Muscovite Prince Alexander is dying for her, though he never spoke to her in his life.

Cler. I understand you: so you'd first venture to pique her against you, and then let her marry you in another person, to be reveng'd of you.

Care. One of the two ways I am pretty sure to succeed.

Cler. Extravagant enough! Pr'ythee, is Sir Solomon in the next room?

Care. What, you want his assistance? Clarinda's in her airs again!

Cler. Faith, Careless, I am almost asham'd to tell you, but I must needs speak with him.

Care. Come along then.

[Exeunt.]

Enter Lady Dainty, Lady Sadlife, and Careless.

Lady D. This rude boisterous man has given me a thousand disorders; the colic, the spleen, the palpitation of the heart, and convulsions all over—Huh! huh! —I must send for the doctor.

Lady

Lady Sad. Come, come, madam, e'en pardon him, and let him be your physician—do but observe his penitence, so humble he dares not speak to you.

Care. [*Folds his arms and sighs.*] Oh!

Lady Sad. How can you hear him sigh so?

Lady D. Nay, let him groan—for nothing but his pangs can ease me.

Care. [*Kneels and presents her his drawn sword; opening his breast.*] Be then at once most barbarously just, and take your vengeance here.

Lady D. No, I give thee life to make thee miserable; live, that my resenting eyes may kill thee every hour.

Care. Nay then, there's no relief but ——— this ———

[*Offering at his sword, Lady Sad life holds him.*]

Lady Sad. Ah! for mercy's sake—barbarous creature, how can you see him thus?

Lady D. Why, I did not bid him kill himself: but do you really think he wou'd ha' don't?

Lady Sad. Certainly, if I had not prevented it.

Lady D. Strange passion! But 'tis its nature to be violent, when one makes it despair.

Lady Sad. Won't you speak to him?

Lady D. No, but if your—is enough concern'd to be his friend, you may tell him—not that it really is so—but you may say—you believe I pity him.

Lady Sad. Sure love was never more ridiculous on both sides.

Enter Wishwell.

Wish. Madam, here's a page from Prince Alexander, desires to give a letter into your ladyship's own hands.

Lady D. Prince Alexander! what means my heart? I come to him.

Lady Sad. By no means, madam, pray let him come in.

Care. Ha! Prince Alexander! nay, then I have found out the secret of this coldness, madam.

Enter Page.

Page. Madam, his Royal Highness Prince Alexander, my master, has commanded me, on pain of death, thus [*Kneeling*] to deliver this, the burning secret of his heart.

Lady D. Where is the Prince?

Page. Repos'd in private on a mourning pallat, 'till your commands vouchsafe to raise him.

Lady Sad. By all means, receive him here immediately.

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diately. I have the honour to be a little known to his highness.

Lady D. The favour, madam, is too great to be resisted: Pray tell his highness then, the honour of the visit he designs me, makes me thankful and impatient! huh! huh!

[*Exit Page.*]

Care. Are my sufferings, madam, so soon forgot then! Was I but flatter'd with the hope of pity?

Lady D. The happy have whole days, and those they choose. [*Resenting.*] The unhappy have but hours, and those they lose.

[*Exit repeating.*]

Lady Sad. Don't you lose a minute then.

Care. I'll warrant you—ten thousand thanks, dear madam, I'll be transform'd in a second—

[*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter Clarinda in man's habit.

Clar. So! I'm in for't now! how I shall come off I can't tell: 'twas but a bare saving game I made with Clerimont; his resentment had brought my pride to its last legs, dissembling: and if the poor man had not lov'd me too well, I had made but a dismal humble figure—I have us'd him ill, that's certain, and he may e'en thank himself for't—he would be sincere.—Well, (begging my sex's pardon) we do make the silliest tyrants—we had better be reasonable; for (to do 'em right) we don't run half the hazard in obeying the good-sense of a lover; at least, I'm reduc'd now to make the experiment—Here they come.

Enter Sir Solomon and Clerimont.

Sir Sol. What have we here! another captain? If I were sure he were a coward now, I'd kick him before he speaks—Is your business with me, sir?

Clar. If your name be Sir Solomon Sadlife.

Sir Sol. Yes, sir, it is, and I'll maintain it, as ancient as any, and related to most of the families in England.

Clar. My business will convince you, sir, that I think well of it.

Sir Sol. And what is your business, sir?

Clar. Why, sir—you have a pretty kinswoman call'd Clarinda.

Cler. Ha!

Sir Sol. And what then, sir—such a rogue as t'other.

[*Aside.*]

Clar.

Clar. Now, fir, I have seen her, and am in love with her.

Cler. Say you so, fir!—I may chance to cure you of it. [*Aside.*]

Clar. And to back my pretensions, fir, I have a good fifteen hundred pounds a-year estate, and am, as you see, a pretty fellow into the bargain.

Sir Sol. She that marries you, fir, will have a choice bargain indeed.

Clar. In short, fir, I'll give you a thousand guineas to make up the match.

Sir Sol. Hum—[*Aside.*] But, fir, my niece is provided for.

Cler. That's well. [*Aside.*]

Sir Sol. But if she were not, fir, I must tell you, she is not to be caught with a smock face and a feather, fir—and——and——let me see you an hour hence. [*Aside.*]

Clar. Well said, uncle. [*Aside.*]——But, fir, I'm in love with her, and positively will have her.

Sir Sol. Whether she likes you or no, fir?

Clar. Like me! ha! ha! I'd fain see a woman that dislikes a pretty fellow with fifteen hundred pounds a-year, a white wig, and black eye-brows.

Cler. Hark you, young gentleman, there must go more than all this to the gaining of that lady.

[*Takes Clarinda aside.*]

Sir Sol. [*Aside.*] A thousand guineas! that's five hundred more than I propos'd to get of Mr. Clerimont—but my honour is engag'd——Ay, but then here's a thousand pounds to release it——Now shall I take the money? It must be so——coin will carry it.

Clar. Oh, fir, if that be all, I'll soon remove your doubts and pretensions—Come, fir, I'll try your courage.

Cler. I am afraid you won't, young gentleman.

Clar. As young as I am, fir, you shall find I scorn to turn my back to any man.——

[*Exeunt Clarinda and Clerimont.*]

Sir Sol. Ha! they are gone to fight—with all my heart—a fair chance at least for a better bargain: for if the young spark shou'd let the air into my friend Clerimont's midriff now, it may possibly cool his love too, and then there's my honour safe, and a thousand guineas snug.

[*Exit.*]

* *Enter*

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‘ Enter Lady Dainty, Lady Sadlife, and Careless, as
‘ Prince Alexander.

‘ Lady D. Your highness, sir, has done me honour
‘ in this visit.

‘ Care. Madam—— [Salutes her.

‘ Lady D. A captivating person !

‘ Care. May the days be taken from my life, and
‘ added to yours!——most incomparable beauty!
‘ whiter than the snow that lies about the year unmelted
‘ on our Russian mountains.

‘ Lady D. How manly his expressions are——we are
‘ extremely oblig’d to the Czar for not taking your
‘ highness home with him.

‘ Care. He left me, madam, to learn to be a ship-
‘ carpenter.

‘ Lady Sad. A very politic accomplishment !

‘ Lady D. And in a prince entirely new.

‘ Care. All his nobles, madam, are masters of some
‘ useful science, and most of our arms are quarter’d with
‘ mechanical instruments, as hatchets, hammers, pick-
‘ axes, and hand-saws.

‘ Lady D. I admire the manly manners of your court.

‘ Lady Sad. Oh ! so infinitely beyond the soft idle-
‘ ness of ours.

‘ Care. ’Tis the fashion, ladies, for the eastern
‘ princes to profess some trade or other——The last
‘ Grand Signor was a locksmith.

‘ Lady D. How new his conversation is !

‘ Care. Too rude, I fear, madam, for so tender a
‘ composition as your divine ladyship’s.

‘ Lady D. Courtly to a softness too !

‘ Care. Were it possible, madam, that so much deli-
‘ cacy cou’d endure the martial roughness of our man-
‘ ners and our country, I cannot boast ; but if a pro-
‘ vince at your feet cou’d make you mine, that province
‘ and its master shou’d be yours.

‘ Lady D. Ay ! here’s grandeur with address ; an
‘ odious native lover now, wou’d have complained of
‘ the taxes, perhaps, and have haggled with one for a
‘ scanty jointure out of his horrid lead-mines, in some
‘ uninhabitable mountains, about an hundred and four-
‘ score miles from unheard-of London.

‘ Care. I am inform’d, madam, there is a certain poor
‘ distracted

‘distracted English fellow, that refus’d to quit his saucy
 ‘pretensions to your all-conquering beauty, though he
 ‘had heard I had myself resolv’d to adore you. Care-
 ‘less, I think they call him.

‘*Lady D.* Your highness wrongs your merit, to give
 ‘yourself the least concern for one so much below your fear.

‘*Care.* When I first heard of him, I on the instant or-
 ‘der’d one of my retinue to strike off his head with a
 ‘scimitar; but they told me the free laws of England
 ‘allow’d of no such power: so that, though I am a prince
 ‘of the blood, madam, I am oblig’d only to murder him
 ‘privately.

‘*Lady D.* ’Tis indeed a reproach to the ill-breeding
 ‘of our constitution, not to admit your power with your
 ‘person. But if the pain of my entire neglect can end
 ‘him, pray be easy.

‘*Care.* Madam, I’m not revengeful; make him but
 ‘miserable—I’m satisfy’d.

‘*Lady D.* You may depend upon’t.

‘*Care.* I’m in strange favour with her——[*Aside.*
 ‘Please you, ladies, to make your fragrant fingers fami-
 ‘liar with this box.

‘*Lady D.* Sweet, or plain, sir?

‘*Care.* Right Mosco, madam, made of the skulls of
 ‘conquer’d enemies.

‘*Lady Sad.* Gunpowder, as I live! *Exeunt.*’

The SCENE changes to a field.

Enter Clarinda and Clerimont.

Cler. Come, sir, we are far enough.

Clar. I only wish the lady were by, sir, that the
 conqueror might carry her off the spot: I warrant she’d
 be mine.

Cler. That, my talking hero, we shall soon determine.

Clar. Not that I think her handsome, or care a rush
 for her.

Cler. You are very mettled, sir, to fight for a woman
 you don’t value!

Clar. Sir, I value the reputation of a gentleman, and
 I don’t think any young fellow ought to pretend to it
 ’till he has talk’d himself into a lampoon, lost his two
 or three thousand pounds at play, kept his mistress, and
 kill’d his man.

Cler. Very gallant indeed, sir! but if you please to
 handle

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handle your sword, you'll soon go through your course.

Clar. Come on, fir—I believe I shall give your mistress a truer account of your heart than you have done. I have had her heart long enough, and now will have your's.

Cler. Ha! does she love you then?

[Endeavouring to draw.]

Clar. I leave you to judge that, fir. But I have lain with her a thousand times; in short, so long, 'till I'm tir'd of it.

Cler. Villain, thou liest! Draw, or I'll use you as you deserve, and stab you.

Clar. Take this with you first—Clarinda will never marry him that murders me.

Cler. She may the man that vindicates her honour—therefore be quick, or I'll keep my word—I find your sword is not for doing things in haste.

Clar. It sticks to the scabbard so; I believe I did not wipe off the blood of the last man I fought with.

Cler. Come, fir! this trifling sha'n't serve your turn: here, give me yours, and take mine.

Clar. With all my heart, fir—Now have at you.

Cler. Death! You villain, do you serve me so!

[Cler. draws and finds only a hilt in his hand.]

Clar. In love and war, fir, all advantages are fair; so we conquer, no matter whether by force or stratagem: Come, quick, fir! Your life or mistress—

Cler. Neither—Death! you shall have both or none: Here drive your sword; for only through this heart you reach Clarinda.

Clar. Death! fir, can you be mad enough to die for a woman that hates you?

Cler. If that were true, 'twere greater madness then to live.

Clar. Why, to my knowledge, fir, she has us'd you basely, falsely, ill, and for no reason.

Cler. No matter; no usage can be worse than the contempt of poorly, tamely parting with her—She may abuse her heart by happy infidelities; but 'tis the pride of mine to be even miserably constant.

Clar. Generous passion—you almost tempt me to resign her to you.

Cler.

Cler. You cannot, if you wou'd—I wou'd indeed have won her fairly from you with my sword, but scorn to take her as your gift. Be quick and end your insolence.—

Clar. Yes, thus—most generous Clerimont—you now indeed have fairly vanquish'd me. [*Runs to him.*] My woman's follies and my shame be buried ever here.

Cler. Ha! Clarinda! is't possible! my wonder rises with my joy—How came you in this habit?

Clar. Now you indeed recall my blushes, but I had no other veil to hide 'em, while I confess'd the injuries I had done your heart, in fooling with a man I never meant on any terms to engage with. Beside, I knew from our late parting, your fear of losing me wou'd reduce you to comply with Sir Solomon's demands, for his interest in your favour: Therefore, as you saw, I was resolv'd to ruin his market by seeming to raise it; for he secretly took the offer I made him.

Cler. 'Twas generously and timely offer'd, for it really prevented my signing articles to him: but if you would heartily convince me that I shall never more have need of his interest, e'en let us steal to the next priest, and honestly put it out of his power ever to part us.

Clar. Why, truly considering the trusts I have made you, 'twou'd be ridiculous now, I think, to deny you any thing—and if you shou'd grow weary of me after such usage, I can't blame you.

Cler. Banish that fear; my flame can never waste, For love sincere refines upon the taste. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Sir Solomon, with old Mr. Willfull: Lady Sad-life, and Sylvia weeping.

Sir. Sol. Troth, my old friend, this is a bad business indeed; you have bound yourself in a thousand pound bond, you say, to marry your daughter to a fine gentleman, and she in the mean time, it seems, is fallen in love with a stranger.

Will. Look you, Sir Solomon, it does not trouble me o' this: For I'll make her do as I please, or I'll starve her.

Lady Sad. But, fir, your daughter tells me that the gentleman she loves is in every degree in as good circumstances as the person you design her for: and if he does not prove himself so before to-morrow morning, she

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she will chearfully submit to whatever you'll impose on her.

Will. All sham! all sham! only to gain time——I expect my friend and his son here immediately, to demand performance of articles; and if her ladyship's nice stomach does not immediately comply with 'em, as I told you before, I'll starve her.

Lady Sad. But consider, fir, what a perpetual discord must a forc'd marriage probably produce.

Will. Discord! pshaw! waw! One man makes as good a husband as another——A month's marriage will set all to rights, I warrant you—you know the old saying, Sir Solomon, lying together makes pigs love.

Lady Sad. [*To Sylvia.*] What shall we do for you? there's no altering him——Did not your lover promise to come to your assistance?

Syl. I expect him every minute—but can't foresee from him the least hope of my redemption——This is he!

Enter Atall undisguised.

At. My Sylvia! dry those tender eyes, for while there's life there's hope.

Lady Sad. Ha! is't he? but I must smother my confusion!

Will. How, now, fir! Pray who gave you commission to be so familiar with my daughter?

At. Your pardon, fir; but when you know me right, you'll neither think my freedom or my pretensions familiar or dishonourable.

Will. Why, fir, what pretensions have you to her?

At. Sir, I sav'd her life at the hazard of my own: That gave me a pretence to know her; knowing her made me love, and gratitude made her receive it.

Will. Ay, fir, and some very good reasons, best known to myself, make me refuse it——Now what will you do?

At. I can't tell yet, fir——But if you'll do me the favour to let me know those reasons——

Will. Sir, I don't think myself oblig'd to do either; but I'll tell you what I'll do for you, since you say you love my daughter, and she loves you, I'll put you in the nearest way to get her.

At. Don't flatter me! I beg you, fir.

Will.

Will. Not I, upon my soul, sir; for look you — 'tis only this — get my consent, and you shall have her.

At. I beg your pardon, sir, for endeavouring to talk reason to you. But to return your rallery, give me leave to tell you, when any man marries her but myself, he must extremely ask my consent.

Will. Before George, thou art a very pretty impudent fellow, and I'm sorry I can't punish her disobedience by throwing her away upon thee.

At. You'll have a great deal of plague about this business, sir; for I shall be mighty difficult to give up my pretensions to her.

Will. Ha! 'tis a thousand pities I can't comply with thee: Thou wilt certainly be a thriving fellow; for thou dost really set the best face upon a bad cause that ever I saw since I was born.

At. Come, sir — once more, rallery apart; suppose I prove myself of equal birth and fortune to deserve her?

Will. Sir, if you were eldest son to the Cham of Tartary, or had the dominions of the Great Mogul entail'd upon you and your heirs for ever, it wou'd signify no more than the bite of my thumb — The girl's dispos'd of, I have match'd her already upon a thousand pounds forfeit, and faith she shall fairly run for't, though she's yerk'd and flea'd from the crest to the crupper.

At. Confusion!

Syl. What will become of me!

Will. And if you don't think me in earnest now, here comes one that will convince you of my sincerity.

At. My father! Nay then my ruin is inevitable.

Enter Sir Harry Atall.

Sir Har. [To *At.*] O sweet sir, have I found you at last! Your very humble servant: What's the reason pray, that you have had the assurance to be almost a fortnight in town, and never come near me? especially when I sent you word I had business of such consequence with you.

At. I understood your business was to marry me, sir, to a woman I never saw; and to confess the truth, I durst not come near you, because I was at the same time in love with one you never saw.

Sir Har. Was you so, sir — why then, sir, I'll find a speedy

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a speedy cure for your passion—Brother Willful—Hey, fiddles there!

At. You may treat me, sir, with what severity you please; but my engagements to that lady are too powerful and fix'd to let the utmost misery dissolve 'em.

Sir Har. What does the fool mean?

At. That I can sooner die than part with her.

Will. Hey!—why, is this your son, Sir Harry?

Sir Har. Hey-dey! why, did not you know that before?

At. O earth! and all you stars! is this the lady you design'd me, sir?

Syl. O fortune, is it possible?

Sir Har. And is this the lady, sir, you have been making such a bustle about?

At. Not life, health, or happiness are half so dear to me.

Sir Sol. [*Joining At. and Sylvia's hands.*] — loll! loll, leroll!

At. O transporting joy! [*Embracing Sylvia.*]

Sir Har. } [*Joining in the tune, and dancing about*
and Will. } [*'em.*] loll! loll!

Sir Sol. Hey! within there! [*Calls the fiddles.*] by jingo we'll make a night on't.

Enter Clarinda and Clarimont.

Clar. Save you, save you, good people! I'm glad, uncle, to hear you call so chearfully for the fiddles, it looks as if you had a husband ready for me.

Sir Sol. Why, that I may have by to-morrow night, madam; but in the mean time, if you please, you may wish your friends joy.

Clar. Dear Sylvia!

Syl. Clarinda!

At. O Clerimont, such a deliverance!

Cler. Give you joy, joy, sir.

Clar. I congratulate your happiness—and am pleas'd our little jealousies are over; Mr. Clerimont has told me all, and cur'd me of curiosity for ever.

Syl. What, married?

Clar. You'll see presently! but, Sir Solomon, what do you mean by to-morrow? why do you fancy I have any more patience than the rest of my neighbours?

Sir

Sir Sol. Why truly, madam, I don't suppose you have; but I believe to-morrow will be as soon as their business can be done, by which time I expect a jolly fox-hunter from Yorkshire, and if you are resolv'd not to have patience till next day, why the same parson may toss you up all four in a dish together.

Clar. A filthy fox-hunter?

Sir Sol. Odzooks! a mettled fellow, that will ride you from day-break to sun-set! none of our flimsy London rascals, that must have a chair to carry 'em to their coach, and a coach to carry 'em to a trapes, and a constable to carry both to the round-house.

Clar. Ay, but this fox-hunter, Sir Solomon, will come home dirty and tir'd as one of his hounds, he'll be always asleep before he's a-bed, and on horseback before he's awake; he must rise early to follow his sport, and I sit up late at cards for want of better diversion——Put this together, my wise uncle.

Sir Sol. Are you so high fed, madam, that a country gentleman of fifteen hundred pounds a year won't go down with you?

Clar. Not so, sir, but you really kept me so sharp, that I was e'en forc'd to provide for myself, and here stands the fox-hunter for my money.

[Claps Cler. on the shoulder.

Sir Sol. How!

Cler. Even so, Sir Solomon—hark in your ear, sir! you really held your consent at so high a price, that to give you a proof of my good husbandry I was resolv'd to save charges, and e'en marry her without it.

Sir Sol. Hell! and——

Clar. And hark you in t'other ear, sir——because I wou'd not have you expose your reverend age by a mistake——Know, sir, I was the young spark with the smooth face and a feather, that offer'd you a thousand guineas for your consent, which you wou'd have been glad to have taken.

Sir Sol. The devil! if ever I traffick in women's flesh again, may all the bank-stocks fall when I have bought 'em, and rise when I have sold 'em!——Hey-dey! what have we here! more cheats!

Cler. Not unlikely, sir—for I fancy they are married.

Enter

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Enter Lady Dainty and Careless.

Lady Sad. That they are, I can assure you—I give your highness joy, madam.

Lady D. Lard! that people of any rank shou'd use such vulgar salutations—though methinks highness has something of grandeur in the sound. But I was in hopes, good people, that confident fellow Careless had been among you.

Care. What say you, madam, (to divert the good company) shall we send for him by way of mortification?

Lady D. By all means; for your sake, methinks, I ought to give him full despair.

Care. Why then, to let you see, that 'tis a much easier thing to cure a fine lady of her sickly taste, than a lover of his impudence—There's Careless for you, without the least tincture of despair about him.

[Discovers himself.]

All. Ha! Careless!

Lady D. Abus'd! undone!

All. Ha! ha!

Cler. Nay, now, madam, we wish you a superior joy; for you have married a man, instead of a monster.

Care. Come! come, madam, since you find you were in the power of such a cheat—you may be glad it was no greater, you might have fallen into a rascal's hands: but you know, I am a gentleman, my fortune no small one, and if your temper will give me leave, will deserve you.

Lady Sad. Come! e'en make the best of your fortune: for take my word, if the cheat had not been a very agreeable one, I wou'd never have had a hand in't—you must pardon me if I can't help laughing.

Lady D. Well! since it must be so, I pardon all; only one thing let me beg of you, sir—that is, your promise to wear this habit one month for my satisfaction.

Care. O, madam! that's a trifle! I'll lie in the sun a whole summer for an olive complexion, to oblige you.

Lady D. Well! Mr. Careless, I begin now to think better of my fortune, and look back with apprehension of the escape I have had; you have already cur'd my folly, and

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and were but my health recoverable, I should think myself completely happy.

Care. For that, madam, we'll venture to save you doctors fees,

And trust to nature: time will soon discover,
Your best physician is a favour'd lover.

[*Exeunt.*



E P I L O G U E.

*WELL, sirs! I know not how the play may pass,
 But, in my humble sense—our bard's an ass;
 For, had he ever known the least of nature,
 H' had found his Double Spark a dismal creature:
 To please two ladies, he two forms puts on,
 As if the thing in shadows cou'd be done:
 The women really two, and he, poor soul! but one.
 Had he revers'd the hint, b' had done the feat,
 Had made the impostor credibly complete:
 A single mistress—might have stood the cheat.
 She might to several lovers have been kind,
 Nor strain'd your faith, to think both pleas'd and blind.
 Plain sense had known, the fair can love receive,
 With half the pains your warmest vows can give.*

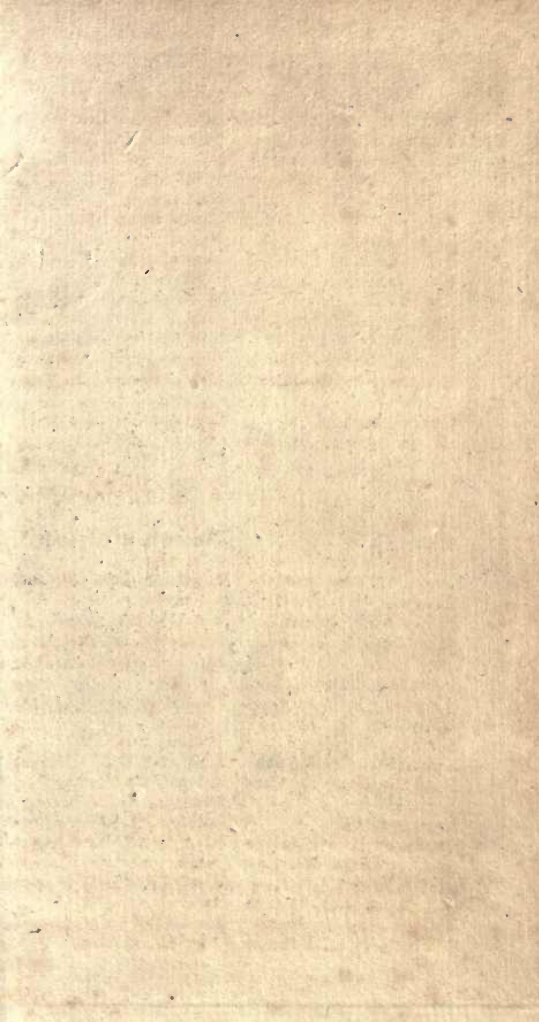
*But, hold!—I'm thinking I mistake the matter;
 On second thoughts:—The hint's but honest satire;
 And only meant t' expose their modish sense,
 Who think the fire of love's—but impudence.
 Our spark was really modest;—when he found
 Two female claims at once, he one disown'd;
 Wisely presuming, though in ne'er such haste,
 One wou'd be found enough for him at last.
 So that to sum the whole—I think the play
 Deserves the usual favours on his day;
 If not, he swears he'll write the next to music,
 In Doggrel rhymes wou'd make or him, or you sick.
 His groveling sense, Italian airs shall crown,
 And then, he's sure, ev'n nonsense will go down.
 But, if you'd have the world suppose the stage
 Not quite forsaken in this airy age,
 Let your glad votes our needless fear confound,
 And speak in claps as loud for sense, as sound.*

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| Otway | Nonjuror, by C. Cibber |
| Funeral, by Sir R. Steele | Oedipus, by Dryden |
| Gamester, by Mrs. Cent- | Old Batchelor, by Con- |
| livre | grave |
| Gentle Shepherd | Oroonoko, by Southern |
| George Barnwell, by Lillo | Orphan, by Otway |
| Gloriana | Othello, by Shakespeare |
| Greenwich Park | Perjured Husband |
| Hamlet, by Shakespeare | Perolla and Isidora, by |
| Henry IV. 2 Parts, by ditto | C. Cibber |
| Henry V. by ditto | Phædra and Hippolitus, |
| Henry VI. 3 Parts, by ditto | by Smith |
| Henry VIII. by ditto | Pilgrim, by Beaumont and |
| Henry V. by Aaron Hill | Fletcher |
| Honest Yorkshireman | Polly, by Mr. Gay |
| Jane Gray, by Rowe | Prophetess, by Beaumont |
| Jane Shore, by Rowe | Provok'd Wife, by Van- |
| Inconstant, by Farquhar | brugh |
| King John, by Shakespeare | Recruiting Officer, by Far- |
| King Lear, by ditto | quhar |
| King Lear, by Tate | Refusal, by Cibber |
| Limberham, by Dryden | Rehearsal, by D. of Bucks |
| Love for Love, by Con- | Relapse, by Vanbrugh |
| grave | Revenge, by Dr. Young |
| Love in a Mist | Richard III. by C. Cibber |
| Love in a Tub, by Etherege | Rival Fools, by C. Cib- |
| Love makes a Man, by | ber |
| C. Cibber | Rival Ladies, by Dryden |
| Love's Last Shift, by ditto | Rival Queens, by Lee |
| Lying Lover, by Steele | Romeo and Juliet, altered |
| Macbeth, by Shakespeare | by Mr. Garrick |



INCONSTANT.



Dodl ad viv del.

Goldar sculp.

MR. WILSON as OLD MIRABEL.

Here, Sirrah, Rogue, Bob, Villain

Published May 3 1777 by T. Lowndes and Partners. Act 3, Scene

T H E
I N C O N S T A N T;
O R, T H E
W A Y T O W I N H I M.
A
C O M E D Y.

WRITTEN BY
MR. GEORGE FARQUHAR.

Marked with the Variations in the
M A N A G E R ' s B O O K,
A T T H E
Theatre Royal in Cobent Garden.

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
Corpora ————— Ovid Met.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. RIVINGTON and Sons, W. JOHNSTON,
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WIN.

M.DCC.LXXVII.

☞ The Reader is desired to observe, that the passages omitted in the Representation at the Theatres are here preserved, and marked with inverted Commas; as in Lines 12 and 13, Page 8.

P R O L O G U E.

LIKE hungry guests, a sitting audience looks ;
 Plays are like suppers : Poets are the cooks.
 The founders you : the table is this place :
 The carvers we : the prologue is the grace.
 Each act, a course ; each scene a different dish :
 Tho' we're in Lent, I doubt you're still for flesh.
 Satire's the sauce, high-season'd, sharp and rough ;
 Kind masks and beaux, I hope you're pepper-proof.
 Wit is the wine ; but 'tis so scarce the true,
 Poets, like vintners, balderdash and brew.
 Your surly scenes, where rant and bloodshed join,
 Are butcher's meat, a battle's a sirloin :
 Your scenes of love, so flowing, soft and chaste,
 Are water-gruel, without salt or taste.
 Bawdy's fat venison, which tho' stale, can please :
 Your rakes love haut-gouts, like your damn'd French cheese.
 Your rarity for the fair guest to gaze on,
 Is your nice Squeaker, or Italian capon ;
 Or your French Virgin-pullet, garnish'd round,
 And dress'd with sauce of some—Four hundred pound.
 An Opera, like an Olio, nicks the age ;
 Farce is the basty-pudding of the stage.
 For when you're treated with indifferent cheer,
 You can dispense with slender stage-coach fare.
 A pastoral's whipt cream ; stage-whims, mere trash ;
 And tragi-comedy, half fish and flesh.
 But comedy, that, that's the darling cheer ;
 This night we hope you'll an Inconstant bear :
 Wild fowl is lik'd in play-house all the year.
 Yet since each mind betrays a diff'rent taste,
 And every dish scarce pleases ev'ry guest,
 If aught you relish, do not damn the rest.
 This favour crav'd, up let the music strike :
 You're welcome all — Now fall to, where you like.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

AT COVENT-GARDEN.

Old Mirabel, an aged Gentleman of an odd Compound, between the peevishness incident to his years, and his Fa- therly fondness towards his Son,	— — —	Mr. SHUTER.
Young Mirabel, his Son,	— — —	Mr. SMITH.
Captain Duretete, an honest good-natured fellow, that thinks himself a greater fool than he is,	— — —	Mr. WOODWARD.
Dugard, Brother to Oriana,	— — —	Mr. GARDNER.
Petit, Servant to Dugard, afterwards to his Sister,	— — —	Mr. CUSHING.

W O M E N.

Oriana, a Lady contracted to Mirabel, who would bring him to reason.	— — —	Mrs. LESSINGHAM.
Bisarre, a whimsical Lady, Friend to Oriana, admired by Duretete,	— — —	Miss MACKLIN.
Lamorce, a Woman of Contrivance	— — —	Mrs. OGLIRE.

Four Bravoes, two Gentlemen, and two Ladies.

Soldiers, Servants, and Attendants.

T H E
I N C O N S T A N T;
O R, T H E
W A Y T O W I N H I M.

A C T I.

S C E N E, *The Street.*

Enter Dugard, and his Man Petit in Riding Habits.

Dug. S I R R A H, what's a clock?

Pet. Turn'd of eleven, fir.

Dug. No more! We have rid a swinging pace from *Nemours* since two this morning! *Petit*, run to *Rouffean's*, and bespeak a dinner at a lewis d'or a head, to be ready by one.

Pet. How many will there be of you, fir?

Dug. Let me see, *Mirabel* one, *Duretete* two, myself: three—

Pet. And I four.

Dug. How now, fir, at your old travelling familiarity! When abroad, you had some freedom for want

6 THE INCONSTANT; OR,

of better company ; but among my friends at *Paris*, pray remember your distance—Begone, sir. — [*Exit Petit.*] 'This fellow's wit was necessary abroad, but he's too cunning for a domestic : I must dispose of him some way else. —Who's here? Old *Mirabel*, and my sister! my dearest sister!

Enter Old Mirabel and Oriana.

Ori. My brother! welcome.

Dug. Monsieur *Mirabel*! I'm heartily glad to see you.

Old Mir. Honest Mr. *Dugard*, by the blood of the *Mirabels*, I'm your most humble servant.

Dug. Why, sir, you've cast your skin sure, you're brisk and gay, lusty health about you, no sign of age but your silver hairs.

Old Mir. Silver hairs! Then they are quick-silver hairs, sir. Whilst I have golden pockets, let my hairs be silver an they will. Adsbud, sir, I can dance, and sing, and drink, and—no, I can't wench. But Mr. *Dugard*, no news of my son *Bob* in all your travels?

Dug. Your son's come home, sir.

Old Mir. Come home! *Bob* come home! By the blood of the *Mirabels*, Mr. *Dugard*, what say ye?

Ori. Mr. *Mirabel* return'd, sir.

Dug. He's certainly come, and you may see him within this hour or two.

Old Mir. Swear it, Mr. *Dugard*, presently swear it.

Dug. Sir, he came to town with me this morning, I left him at the *Bagnieurs*, being a little disorder'd after riding, and I shall see him again presently.

Old Mir. What! and he was asham'd to ask a blessing with his boots on. A nice dog! Well, and how fares the young rogue, ha?

Dug. A fine gentleman, sir. He'll be his own messenger.

Old Mir. A fine gentleman! But is the rogue like me still?

Dug. Why, yes, sir; he's very like his mother, and as like you as most modern sons are to their fathers.

Old Mir. Why, sir, don't you think that I begat him?

Dug. Why yes, sir; you married his mother, and he inherits your estate. He's very like you, upon my word.

Ori.

Ori. And pray, brother, what's become of his honest companion, *Duretete*?

Dug. Who, the captain? The very same, he went abroad; he's the only *Frenchman* I ever knew that could not change. Your son, *Mr. Mirabel*, is more obliged to nature for that fellow's composition, than for his own: for he's more happy in *Duretete*'s folly than his own wit. In short, they are as inseparable as finger and thumb; but the first instance in the world, I believe, of opposition in friendship.

Old Mir. Very well; will he be home to dinner, think ye?

Dug. Sir, he has order'd me to bespeak a dinner for us at *Roussseau's*, at a lewis d'or a head.

Old Mir. A lewis d'or a head! Well said, *Bob*; by the blood of the *Mirabels*, *Bob's* improv'd. But *Mr. Dugard*, was it so civil of *Bob* to visit *Monfieur Roussseau* before his own natural father? Eh, heark'e *Oriana*, what think you, now, of a fellow that can eat and drink ye a whole lewis d'or at a sitting? he must be as strong as *Hercules*, life and spirit in abundance. Before Gad I don't wonder at these men of quality, that their own wives can't serve 'em. A lewis d'or a head! 'tis enough to stock the whole nation with bastards, 'tis faith. *Mr. Dugard*, I leave you with your sister. [Exit.

Dug. Well, sister, I need not ask you how you do, your looks resolve me; fair, tall, well-shap'd; you're almost grown out of my remembrance.

Ori. Why, truly brother, I look pretty well, thank nature and my toilet; 'I have 'scap'd the jaundice, green-sickness, and the small-pox;' I eat three meals a day, am very merry when up, and sleep soundly when I'm down.

Dug. But, sister, you remember that upon my going abroad, you would chuse this old gentleman for your guardian; he's no more related to our family, than *Prefter John*, and I have no reason to think you mistrusted my management of your fortune: therefore pray be so kind as to tell me, without reservation, the true cause of making such a choice.

8 THE INCONSTANT; OR,

Ori. Look'e, brother, you were going rambling, and 'twas proper, lest I should go a rambling too, that somebody should take care of me. Old Monsieur *Mirabel* is an honest gentleman, was our father's friend, and has a young lady in his house, whose company I like, and who has chosen him for her guardian as well as I.

Dug. Who Mademoiselle *Bisarre*?

Ori. The same; we live merrily together, without scandal or reproach; we make much of the old gentleman between us, and he takes care of us; we eat what we like, go to bed when we please, rise when we will, all the week we dance and sing, and upon Sundays go first to church, and then to the play.—Now, brother, besides these motives for chusing this gentleman for my guardian, perhaps I had some private reasons.

Dug. Not so private as you imagine, sister; your love to young *Mirabel*'s no secret, I can assure you, but so public that all your friends are asham'd on't.

Ori. O my word then, my friends are very bashful; tho' I'm afraid, sir, that those people are not asham'd enough at their own crimes, who have so many blushes to spare for the faults of their neighbours.

Dug. Ay, but sister, the people say——

Ori. Phaw, hang the people, they'll talk treason, and profane their Maker; must we therefore infer, that our king is a tyrant, and religion a cheat? Look'e, brother, their court of enquiry is a tavern, and their informer, claret: they think as they drink, and swallow reputations like loaches; a lady's health goes briskly round with the glass, but her honour is lost in the toast.

Dug. Ay, but sister, there is still something——

Ori. If there be something, brother, 'tis none of the people's something; marriage is my thing, and I'll stick to't.

Dug. Marriage! Young *Mirabel* marry! He'll build churches sooner. Take heed, sister, tho' your honour stood proof to his home-bred assaults; you must keep a stricter guard for the future: he has now got the foreign air, and the *Italian* softness; his wit's improved by converse, his behaviour finished by observation, and his assurances

assurances confirmed by success. Sister, I can assure you, he has made his conquests; and 'tis a plague upon your sex, to be the soonest deceiv'd by those very men that you know have been false to others.

'Ori. Then why will you tell me of his conquests? for I must confess there is no title to a woman's favour so engaging as the repute of a handsome dissimulation; there is something of a pride to see a fellow lie at our feet, that has triumph'd over so many; and then, I don't know, we fancy he must have something extraordinary about him to please us, and that we have something engaging about us to secure him; so we can't be quiet till we put ourselves upon the lay of being both disappointed.

'Dug.' But then, sister, he's as fickle—

Ori. For heav'n's sake, brother, tell me no more of his faults; for if you do, I shall run mad for him: say no more, sir, let me but get him into the bands of matrimony, I'll spoil his wand'ring, I warrant him, I'll do his business that way, never fear.

Dug. Well, sister, I won't pretend to understand the engagements between you and your lover; I expect when you have need of my counsel or assistance, you will let me know more of your affairs. *Mirabel* is a gentleman, and as far as my honour and interest can reach, you may command me to the furtherance of your happiness: in the mean time, sister, I have a great mind to make you a present of another humble servant: a fellow that I took up at *Lyons*, who has serv'd me honestly ever since.

Ori. Then why will you part with him?

Dug. He has gain'd so insufferably on my good humour, that he's grown too familiar; but the fellow's cunning, and may be serviceable to you in your affair with *Mirabel*. Here he comes.

Enter Petit.

Well, sir, have you been at *Roussseau's*?

Pet. Yes, sir, and who should I find there but Mr. *Mirabel* and the captain, hatching as warmly over a tub of ice, as two hen pheasants over a brood—They would

would not let me bespeak any thing, for they had dined before I came.

Dug. Come, sir, you shall serve my sister, I shall still continue kind to you; and if your lady recommends your diligence upon trial, I'll use my interest to advance you; you have sense enough to expect preferment.—Here, sirrah, here's ten guineas for thee, get thyself a drugget suit and a puff-wig, and so—I dub thee gentleman usher.—Sister, I must put myself in repair, you may expect me in the evening—Wait on your lady home, *Petit*. [Exit *Dug.*]

Pet. A chair, a chair, a chair!

Ori. No, no, I'll walk home, 'tis but next door.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE *a tavern, discovering young Mirabel and Duretete rising from table.*

Mir. Welcome to *Paris* once more, my dear captain, we have eat heartily, drank roundly, paid plentifully, and let it go for once. I lik'd every thing but our women, they look'd so lean and tawdry, poor creatures! 'Tis a sure sign the army is not paid.—Give me the plump *Venetian*, brisk and sanguine, that 'smiles upon me like the glowing sun, and' meets my lips like sparkling wine, her person shining as the glass, and spirit like the foaming liquor.

Dur. Ah, *Mirabel*, *Italy* I grant you; but for our women here in *France*, they are such thin brawn fall'n jades, a man may as well make a bed-fellow of a cane chair.

Mir. *France!* a light unseason'd country, nothing but feathers, foppery, and fashions; 'we're fine indeed, so are our coach-horses; men say we're courtiers, men abuse us; that we are wise and politic, *non credo Seigneur*: that our women have wit; parrots, 'mere parrots, assurance and a good memory, sets them up:—There's nothing on this side the *Alps* worth my humble service t'ye'—Ha *Roma la Santa!* *Italy* for my money; their customs, gardens, buildings, paintings, music, policies, wine and women! the paradise of the world:—not pester'd with a parcel of precise old gouty fellows, that would debar their children

dren every pleasure that they themselves are past the sense of: commend me to the *Italian* familiarity: here, son, there's fifty crowns, go pay your whore her week's allowance.

Dur. Ay, these are your fathers for you, that understand the necessities of young men; not like our musty dads, who because they cannot fish themselves, would muddy the water, and spoil the sport of them that can. But now you talk of the plump, what d'ye think of a *Dutch* woman?

Mir. A *Dutch* woman's too compact; nay, every thing among 'em is so; a *Dutch* man is thick, a *Dutch* woman is squab, a *Dutch* horse is round, a *Dutch* dog is short, a *Dutch* ship is broad-bottom'd; and, in short, one wou'd swear the whole product of the country were cast in the same mould with their cheeses.

Dur. Ay, but *Mirabel*, you have forgot the *English* ladies.

Mir. The women of *England* were excellent, did they not take such unsufferable pains to ruin what nature has made so incomparably well; they would be delicate creatures indeed, cou'd they but thoroughly arrive at the *French* mien, or entirely let it alone; for they only spoil a very good air of their own, by an aukward imitation of ours; their parliaments and our taylors give laws to their three kingdoms. But come, *Duretete*, let us mind the business in hand; mistresses we must have, and must take up with the manufacture of the place, and upon a competent diligence we shall find those in *Paris* shall match the *Italians* from top to toe.

Dur. Ay, *Mirabel*, you will do well enough, but what will become of your friend; you know I am so plaguy bashful, so naturally an ass upon these occasions, that—

Mir. Pshaw, you must be bolder, man: travel three years, and bring home such a baby as bashfulness! A great lusty fellow! and a soldier! fye upon it.

Dur. Look'e, sir, I can visit, and I can ogle a little,—as thus, or thus now.—Then I can kiss, abundantly, and make a shift to—but if they chance to give me a forbidding look, as some women, you know, have a devilish cast with their eyes—or if they cry—what d'ye

mean; what d'ye take me for? Fye, fir, remember who I am, fir——A person of quality to be us'd at this rate! I-gad I'm struck as flat as a frying-pan.

Mir. Words o'course! never mind 'em: turn you about upon your heel with a jantée air; hum out the end of an old song; cut a cross caper, and at her again.

Dur. [*Imitates him.*] No hang it, 'twill never do.—Oons, what did my father mean by sticking me up in an university, or to think that I shou'd gain any thing by my head, in a nation whose genius lies all in their heels!——Weil, if ever I come to have children of my own, they shall have the education of the country, they shall learn to dance before they can walk, and be taught to sing before they can speak.

Mir. Come, come, throw off that childish humour, put on assurance, there's no avoiding it; stand all hazards, thou'rt a stout lusty fellow, and hast a good estate, look bluff, hector, you have a good side-box face, a pretty impudent face; so that's pretty well.—This fellow went abroad like an ox, and is return'd like an ass. [*Aside.*]

Dur. Let me see now, how I look, [*Pulls out a pocket-glass, and looks on't.*] A side-box face, say you!—'Egad I don't like it, *Mirabel*.—Fye, fir, don't abuse your friends, I cou'd not wear such a face for the best countesses in Christendom.

Mir. Why can't you, blockhead, as well as I?

Dur. Why, thou hast impudence to set a good face upon any thing, I wou'd change half my gold for half thy brags, with all my heart. Who comes here? Odso, *Mirabel*, your father!

Enter Old Mirabel.

Old Mir. Where's *Bob*? dear *Bob*?

Mir. Your blessing, fir.

Old Mir. My Blessing! Damn ye, ye young rogue; why did not you come to see your father first, firrah? My dear boy, I am heartily glad to see thee, my dear child, faith—Capt. *Duretete*, by the blood of the *Mirabels*, I'm your's; well, my lads, ye look bravely faith.—*Bob*, hast got any money left?

Mir. Not a farthing, fir.

Old

Old Mir. Why, then I won't gi' thee a soufe.

Mir. I did but jest, here's ten pistoles.

Old Mir. Why, then here's ten more ; I love to be charitable to those that don't want it :—Well, and how d'ye like *Italy*, my boys ?

Mir. O the garden of the world, fir ; *Rome, Naples, Venice, Milan*, and a thousand others—all fine.

Old Mir. Ay, say you so ! And they say, that *Cbiari* is very fine too.

Dur. Indifferent, fir, very indifferent ; a very scurvy air, the most unwholesome to a *French* constitution in the world.

Mir. Pshaw, nothing on't ; these rascally *Gazetteers* have misinform'd you.

Old Mir. Misinform'd me ! Oons, fir, were not we beaten there ?

Mir. Beaten, fir ! the *French* beaten !

Old Mir. Why, how was it, pray sweet fir ?

Mir. Sir, the captain will tell you.

Dur. No, fir, your son will tell you.

Mir. The captain was in the action, fir.

Dur. Your son saw more than I, fir, for he was a looker on.

Old Mir. Confound you both for a brace of cowards : here are no *Germans* to over-hear you ; why don't ye tell me how it was ?

Mir. Why, then you must know, that we march'd up a body of the finest, bravest, well-dress'd fellows in the universe ; our commanders at the head of us, all lace and feather, like so many beaux at a ball—I dont believe there was a man of 'em but cou'd dance a *Charmer morbleau*.

Old Mir. Dance ! very well, pretty fellows, faith !

Mir. We caper'd up to their very trenches, and there saw peeping over a parcel of scare crow, olive-colour'd gunpowder fellows, as ugly as the devil.

Dur. I-gad, I shall never forget the looks of 'em, while I have breath to fetch.

Mir. They were so civil, indeed, as to welcome us with their cannon ; but for the rest, we found 'em such
unman-

unmannerly, rude, unfociable dogs, that we grew tir'd of their company, and so we e'en danc'd back again.

Old Mir. And did ye all come back?

Mir. No, two or three thousand of us stay'd behind,

Old Mir. Why, *Bob*, why?

Mir. Pshaw—because they cou'd not come that night.—But come, sir, we were talking of something else; pray how does you lovely charge, the fair *Oriana*?

Old Mir. Ripe, sir, just ripe; you'll find it better engaging with her than with the *Germans*, let me tell you. And what wou'd you say, my young *Mars*, if I had a *Venus* for thee too? Come, *Bob*, your apartment is ready, and pray let your friend be my guest too, you shall command the house between ye, and I'll be as merry as the best of you.

Mir. Bravely said, father.

‘ Let misers bend their age with niggard cares,
 ‘ And starve themselves to pamper hungry heirs;
 ‘ Who living, stint their sons what youth may crave,
 ‘ And make 'em revel o'er a father's grave,
 ‘ The stock on which I grew does still dispense
 ‘ Its genial sap into the blooming branch;
 ‘ The fruit, he knows, from his own root is grown,
 ‘ And therefore sooths those passions once his own.’

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T II.

SCENE, *Old Mirabel's house.*

Enter Oriana and Bisarre.

Bis. **A**ND you love this young rake, d'ye?

Ori. Yes.

Bis. In spite of all his ill usage.

Ori. I can't help it.

Bis. What's the matter wi' ye?

Ori.

Ori. Pshaw !

Bis. Um !—before that any young, lying, swearing, flattering, rakehelly fellow should play such tricks with me, I wou'd wear my teeth to the stumps with lime and chalk.—O, the devil take all your *Cassandras* and *Cleopatras* for me.—Prithee mind your airs, modes, and fashions ; your stays, gowns and furbelows. Hark'ee, my dear, have you got home your furbelow'd smocks yet ?

Ori. Prithee be quiet, *Bisarre* ; you know I can be as mad as you when this *Mirabel* is out of my head.

Bis. Pshaw ! wou'd he were out, or in, or some way to make you easy.—I warrant now, you'll play the fool when he comes, and say you love him ; eh !

Ori. Most certainly,—I can't dissemble, *Bisarre* :—besides, 'tis past that, we're contracted.

Bis. Contracted ! alack-a-day, poor thing. What you have chang'd rings, or broken an old *broad-piece* between you ! Hark'e, child, han't you broke something else between ye ?

Ori. No, no, I can assure you.

Bis. Then, what d'ye whine for ? Whilst I kept that in my power, I wou'd make a fool of any fellow in *France*. Well, I must confess, I do love a little coquetting with all my heart ! my business should be to break gold with my lover one hour, and crack my promise the next ; he shou'd find me one day with a prayer-book in my hand, and with a play-book another. He shou'd have my consent to buy the wedding-ring, and the next moment wou'd I laugh in his face.

Ori. O my dear, were there no greater tye upon my heart, than there is upon my conscience, I wou'd soon throw the contract out o' doors ; ' but the mischief on't ' is, I am so fond of being ty'd that I'm forc'd to be ' just, and the strength of my passion keeps down the inclination of my sex.' But here's the old gentleman.

Enter Old Mirabel.

Old Mir. Where's my wenches ; where's my two little girls : Eh ! have a care, look to yourselves, faith, they're a coming, the travellers are a coming. Well ! which of you two will be my daughter-in-law now,

Bisarre,

16 THE INCONSTANT; OR,

Bisarre, Bisarre, what say you, mad-cap? *Mirabel* is a pure wild fellow.

Bis. I like him the worse.

Old Mir. You lie, hussy, you like him the better, indeed you do: What say you, my t'other little filbert? he!

Ori. I suppose the gentleman will chuse for himself fir.

Old Mir. Why, that's discreetly said; and so he shall.

Enter Mirabel and Duretete, they salute the ladies.

Old Mir. Hark'e, you shall marry one of these girls, firrah.

Mir. Sir, I'll marry 'em both, if you please.

Bis. [*Aside.*] He'll find that one may serve his turn.

Old Mir. Both! Why, you young dog, d'ye banter me?—Come, fir, take your choice.—*Duretete*, you shall have your choice too; but *Robin* shall chuse first. Come, fir, begin.

Mir. Well, I an't the first son that has made his father's dwelling a bawdy-house—let me see.

Old Mir. Well! which d'ye like?

Mir. Both.

Old Mir. But which will you marry?

Mir. Neither.

Old Mir. Neither—Don't make me angry now, *Bob*; pray don't make me angry.—Look'e, firrah, if I don't dance at your wedding to-morrow, I shall be very glad to cry at your grave.

Mir. That's a bull, father.

Old Mir. A bull! Why, how now, ungrateful fir, did I make thee a man, that thou shouldst make me a beast.

Mir. You pardon, fir. I only meant your expression.

Old Mir. Hark'e, *Bob*, learn better manners to your father before strangers: I won't be angry this time.—But oons, if ever you do't again, you rascal, remember what I say. [*Exit.*]

Mir. Pshaw, what does the old fellow mean by mewing me up here with a couple of green girls? Come, *Duretete*, will you go?

Ori. I hope Mr. *Mirabel*, you han't forgot.—

Mir. No, no, madam, I han't forgot, I have brought you a thousand little *Italian* curiosities; I'll assure you, madam, as far as a hundred pistoles would reach, I han't forgot the least circumstance.

Ori.

Ori. Sir, you misunderstand me.

Mir. Odso, the relics, madam, from *Rome*. I do remember now you made a vow of chastity before my departure; a vow of chastity, or something like it; was it not, madam?

Ori. O sir, I'm answer'd at present. [Exit.

Mir. She was coming full mouth upon me with her contract—Would I might dispatch t'other.

Dur. Mirabel—that lady there, observe her, she's wond'rous pretty faith, and seems to have but few words; I like her mainly; speak to her, man, prithee speak to her.

Mir. Madam, here's a gentleman, who declares—

Dur. Madam, don't believe him, I declare nothing—What the devil do you mean, man?

Mir. He says, madam, that you are as beautiful as an angel.

Dur. He tells a damn'd lye, madam; I say no such thing: Are you mad, *Mirabel*? Why, I shall drop down with shame.

Mir. And so, madam, not doubting but your ladyship may like him as well as he does you, I think it proper to leave you together. [Going, Duretete holds him.

Dur. Hold, hold—Why, *Mirabel*, friend, sure you won't be so barbarous as to leave me alone. Prithee speak to her for yourself, as it were. Lord, lord, that a *Frenchman* should want impudence!

Mir. You look mighty demure, madam—She's deaf, captain.

Dur. I had much rather have her dumb.

Mir. The gravity of your air, madam, promises some extraordinary fruits from your study, which moves us with curiosity to enquire the subject of your ladyship's contemplation. Not a word!

Dur. I hope in the Lord she's speechless; if she be, she's mine this moment.—*Mirabel*, d'ye think a woman's silence can be natural?—

Bis. But the forms that logicians introduce, and which proceed from simple enumeration, are dubitable, and proceed only upon admittance—

Mir.

Mir. Hoyty toyty ! what a plague have we hear ?
Plato in petticoats.

Dur. Ay, ay, let her go on, man ; she talks in my own mother tongue.

Bis. 'Tis expos'd to invalidity from a contradictory instance, looks only upon common operations, and is infinite in its termination.

Mir. Rare pedantry.

Dur. Axioms ! axioms ! self evident principles.

Bis. Then the ideas wherewith the mind is pre-occupied.—O gentlemen, I hope you'll pardon my cogitation ; I was involv'd in a profound point of philosophy ; but I shall discuss it somewhere else, being satisfy'd that the subject is not agreeable to your sparks, that profess the vanity of the times. [Exit.]

Mir. Go thy way, good wife *Bias* : Do you hear, *Duretete* ? Do'st hear this starch'd piece of austerity ?

Dur. She is mine, man ; she's mine : My own talent to a T. I'll match her in dialects, faith. I was seven years at the university, man, nurs'd up with *Barbara*, *Celarunt*, *Darii*, *Ferio*, *Baralipton*. Did you ever know, man, that 'twas metaphysics made me an ass ? It was, faith. Had she talk'd a word of singing, dancing, plays, fashions, or the like, I had founder'd at the first step ; but as she is—*Mirabel*, with me joy.

Mir. You don't mean marriage, I hope.

Dur. No, no, I am a man of more honour.

Mir. Bravely resolv'd, captain, now for thy credit, warm me this frozen snow-ball, 'twill be a conquest above the *Alps*.

Dur. But will you promise to be always near me ?

Mir. Upon all occasions, never fear.

Dur. Why then, you shall see me in two moments make an induction from my love to her hand, from her hand to her mouth, from her mouth to her heart, and so conclude in her bed, *Categorematicæ*. [Exit.]

Mir. Now the game begins, and my fool is enter'd — But here comes one to spoil my sport ; now shall I be teas'd to death with this old fashion'd contract. I shou'd love her too, if I might do it my own way, but she'll

she'll do nothing without witnesses, forsooth. I wonder women can be so immodest.

Enter Oriana.

Well, madam, why d'ye follow me?

Ori. Well, sir, why do you shun me?

Mir. 'Tis my humour, madam, and I'm naturally sway'd by inclination.

Ori. Have you forgot our contract, sir?

Mir. All I remember of that contract is, that it was made some three years ago, and that's enough in conscience to forget the rest on't.

Ori. 'Tis sufficient, sir, to recollect the passing of it; for in that circumstance, I presume, lies the force of the obligation.

Mir. Obligations, madam, that are forc'd upon the will, are no tye upon the conscience; I was a slave to my passion when I pass'd the instrument; but the recovery of my freedom makes the contract void.

Ori. Sir, you can't make that a compulsion which was your own choice; besides, sir, a subjection to your own desires has not the virtue of a forcible constraint: And you will find, sir, that to plead your passion for the killing of a man, will hardly exempt you from the justice of the punishment.

Mir. And so, madam, you make the sin of murder, and the crime of a contract, the very same, because that hanging and matrimony are so much alike.

Ori. Come, Mr *Mirabel*, these expressions I expected from the raillery of your humour, but I hope for very different sentiments from your honour and generosity.

Mir. Look'e, madam, as for my generosity, 'tis at your service, with all my heart: I'll keep you a coach and six horses, if you please, only permit me to keep my honour to myself; for I can assure you, madam, that the thing called honour is a circumstance absolutely unnecessary in a natural correspondence between male and female, and he's a mad-man that lays it out, considering its scarcity, upon any such trivial occasions. There's honour requir'd of us by our friends, and honour due to our enemies, and they return it to us again; but I never heard of a man that left but an inch of his honour

honour in a woman's keeping, that could ever get the least account on't.—'Consider, madam, you have no such thing among ye, and 'tis a main point of policy to keep no faith with reprobates—thou art a pretty little reprobate, and so get thee about thy business.'

Ori. Well, sir, ev'n all this I will allow to the gaiety of your temper; your travels have improv'd your talent of talking, but they are not of force, I hope, to impair your morals.

Mir. Morals! Why there 'tis again now—I tell thee, child, there is not the least occasion for morals in any business between you and I—Don't you know, that of all commerce in the world there is no such cozenage and deceit as in the traffic between man and woman; we study all our lives long how to put tricks upon one another—'What is your business now from the time you throw away your artificial babies, but how to get natural ones with the most advantage!'—No fowler lays abroad more nets for his game, nor a hunter for his prey, than you do to catch poor innocent men—'Why do you sit three or four hours at your toilet in a morning? only with a villainous design to make some poor fellow a fool before night. What are your languishing looks, your studied air and affectations, but so many baits and devices to delude men out of their dear liberty and freedom?'—What d'ye sigh for? What d'ye weep for? What d'ye pray for? Why, for a husband: that is, you implore Providence to assist you in the just and pious design of making the wisest of his creatures a fool, and the head of the creation a slave.

Ori. Sir, I am proud of my power, and am resolv'd to use it.

Mir. Hold, hold, madam, not so fast—As you have variety of vanities to make coxcombs of us; so we have vows, oaths, and protestations of all sorts and sizes to make fools of you. 'As you are very strange and whimsical creatures, so we are allow'd as unaccountable ways of managing you.' And this, in short, my dear creature, is our present condition. I have sworn and ly'd briskly to gain my ends of you; your ladyship has patch'd and painted violently, to gain your ends.

ends of me.—But, since we are both disappointed, let us make a drawn battle, and part clear on both sides.

Ori. With all my heart, sir; give me up my contract, and I'll never see your face again.

Mir. Indeed I won't, child.

Ori. What, sir, neither do one nor t'other?

Mir. No, you shall die a maid, unless you please to be otherwise upon my terms.

Ori. What do you intend by this, sir?

Mir. Why, to starve you into compliance; look'e, you shall never marry any man; and you had as good let me do you a kindness as a stranger.

Ori. Sir, you're a——

Mir. What am I, mistress?

Ori. A villain, sir?

Mir. I'm glad on't—I never knew an honest fellow in my life, but was a villain upon these occasions.—Ha'n't you drawn yourself now into a very pretty dilemma? Ha, ha, ha! the poor lady has made a vow of virginity, when she thought of making a vow for the contrary. Was ever poor woman so cheated into chastity?

Ori. Sir, my fortune is equal to yours, my friends as powerful, and both shall be put to the test, to do me justice.

Mir. What! you'll force me to marry you, will ye?

Ori. Sir, the law shall.

Mir. But the law can't force me to do any thing else, can it?

Ori. Pshaw, I despise thee—Monster.

Mir. Kifs and be friends then—Don't cry, child, and you shall have your sugar-plumb—Come, madam, d'ye think I could be so unreasonable as to make you fast all your life long? No, I did but jest, you shall have your liberty; here, take your contract, and give me mine.

Ori. No, I won't.

Mir. Eh! What is the girl a fool?

Ori. No, sir, you shall find me cunning enough to do myself justice; and since I must not depend upon your love, I'll be reveng'd, and force you to marry me out of spite.

Mir.

Mir. Then I'll beat thee out of spight; and make a most confounded husband.

Ori. O fir, I shall match ye: a good husband makes a good wife at any time.

Mir. I'll rattle down your china about your ears.

Ori. And I'll rattle about the city to run you in debt for more.

Mir. Your face-mending toilet shall fly out of the window.

Ori. And your face-mending perriwig shall fly after it.

Mir. I'll tear the furbelow off your clothes, and when you swoon for vexation, you sha'nt have a penny to buy a bottle of harts-horn.

Ori. And you, fir, shall have harts-horn in abundance.

Mir. I'll keep as many mistresses as I have coach-horses.

Ori. And I'll keep as many gallants as you have grooms.

Mir. I'll lie with your woman before your face.

Ori. Have a care of your valet behind your back.

Mir. But, sweet madam, there is such a thing as a divorce.

Ori. But, sweet fir, there is such a thing as alimony, so divorce on, and spare not. [Exit.]

Mir. Ay, that separate maintenance is the devil—there's their refuge—o' my conscience, one wou'd take cuckoldom for a meritorious action, because the women are so handsomely rewarded for't. [Exit.]

SCENE changes to a large parlour in the same house.

Enter Duretete and Petit.

Dur. And she's mighty peevish, you say?

Pet. O fir, she has a tongue as long as my leg, and talks so crabbedly, you wou'd think she always spoke *Welsh*.

Dur. That's an odd language, methinks, for her philosophy.

Pet. But sometimes she will sit you half a day without speaking a word, and talk oracles all the while by the wrinkles of her forehead, and the motions of her eyebrows.

Dur. Nay, I shall match her in philosophical ogles, faith; that's my talent: I can talk best, you must know, when I say nothing.

Pet.

Pet. But d'ye ever laugh, sir?

Dur. Laugh? Won't she endure laughing?

Pet. Why she's a critic, sir, she hates a jest, for fear it should please her; and nothing keeps her in humour but what gives her the spleen. And then for logic, and all that, you know—

Dur. Ay, ay, I'm prepar'd, I have been practising hard words, and nonsense, this hour to entertain her.

Pet. Then place yourself behind this screen, that you may have a view of her behaviour before you begin.

Dur. I long to engage her, lest I shou'd forget my lesson.

Pet. Here she comes, sir, I must fly.

[Exit *Pet.* and *Dur.* stands peeping behind the curtain.

Enter Bizarre and maid.

Bis. [With a book] Phaw, hang books, they sour our temper, spoil our eyes, and ruin our complexions.

[Throws away the book.

Dur. Eh! the devil such a word is there in all *Aristotle*.

Bis. Come, wench, let's be free, call in the fiddle, there's no body near us.

Enter Fidler.

Dur. Wou'd to the Lord there was not.

Bis. Here, friend, a minuet!—quicker time! ha—wou'd we had a man or two.

Dur. [Stealing away.] You shall have the devil sooner, my dear dancing philosopher.

Bis. Uds my life!—Here's one.

[Runs to *Dur.* and hauls him back.

Dur. Is all my learn'd preparation come to this?

Bis. Come, sir, don't be agham'd, that's my good boy—you're very welcome, we wanted such a one—Come, strike up—I know you dance well, sir, you're finely shap'd for't—Come, come, sir; quick, quick, you miss the time else.

Dur. But, madam, I come to talk with you.

Bis. Ay, ay, talk as you dance, talk as you dance, come.

Dur. But we were talking of dialectics.

Bis. Hang dialectics—Mind the time—quicker, Sirrah, [To the fidler] Come—and how d'ye find yourself now, sir?

Dur. In a fine breathing sweat, doctor.

Bis.

Bis. All the better, patient, all the better; — Come, fir, sing now, sing, I know you sing well; I see you have a singing face; a heavy dull sonato face.

Dur. Who, I sing?

Bis. O you're modest, fir—but come, sit down, closer, closer. Here, a bottle of wine—Come, fir, fa, la, lay; sing, fir.

Dur. But, madam, I came to talk with you.

Bis. O fir, you shall drink first. Come, fill me a bumper—here, fir, blest the king.

Dur. Wou'd I were out of his dominions—by this light, she'll make me drunk too.

Bis. O pardon me, fir, you shall do me right, fill it higher.—Now, fir, can you drink a health under your leg?

Dur. Rare philosophy that, faith.

Bis. Come, off with it to the bottom.—Now, how d'ye like me, fir?

Dur. O mighty well, madam.

Bis. You see how a woman's fancy varies, sometimes splenetic and heavy, then gay and frolicsome.—And how d'ye like the humour?

Dur. Good madam, let me sit down to answer you, for I am heartily tir'd.

Bis. Fye upon't; a young man, and tir'd! up for shame, and walk about, action becomes us—a little faster, fir.—What d'ye think now of my lady *La Pale*, and lady *Coquet*, the Duke's fair daughter? Ha! Are they not brisk lasses? Then there is black Mrs. *Bellair*, and brown Mrs. *Bellface*.

Dur. They are all strangers to me, madam.

Bis. But let me tell you, fir, that brown is not always despicable—O lard, fir, if young Mrs. *Bagatell* had kept herself single 'till this time, o'day, what a beauty there had been! And then, you know, the charming Mrs. *Monkeylove*, the fair gem of *St. Germain's*.

Dur. Upon my soul, I don't.

Bis. And then you must have heard of the *English* beau, *Splenamore*, how unlike a gentleman—

Dur. Hey—not a syllable on't, as I hope to be saved, madam.

Bis. No! Why then play me a jig. Come, sir.

Dur. By this light I cannot; faith, madam, I have sprain'd my leg.

Bis. Then sit you down, sir; and now tell me what's your business with me? What's your errand? Quick, quick, dispatch.—Odso, may be you are some gentleman's servant, that has brought me a letter, or a haunch of venison.

Dur. 'Sdeath, madam, do I look like a carrier?

Bis. O! cry you mercy, I saw you just now, I mistook you, upon my word: you are one of the travelling gentlemen—and pray, sir, how do all our impudent friends in *Italy*?

Dur. Madam, I came to wait on you with a more serious intention than your entertainment has answered.

Bis. Sir, your intention of waiting on me was the greatest affront imaginable, howe'er your expressions may turn it to a compliment: your visit, sir, was intended as a prologue to a very scurvy play, of which Mr. *Mirabel* and you so handsomely laid the plot.—*Marry! No, no, I'm a man of more honour.* Where's your honour? Where's your courage now? Ads my life, sir, I have a great mind to kick you.—Go, go to your fellow-rake now, rail at my sex and get drunk for vexation, and write a lampoon—But I must have you to know, sir, that my reputation is above the scandal of a libel, my virtue is sufficiently approv'd to those whose opinion is my interest: and for the rest, let them talk what they will; for when I please I'll be what I please, in spite of you and all mankind; and so my dear *man of honour*, if you be tir'd, con over this lesson, and sit there till I come to you. [Runs off.]

Dur. Tum ti tum. [*Sings*] Ha, ha, ha! *Ads my life, I have a great mind to kick you!*—Oons and confusion! [*Starts up*] Was ever man so abus'd?—Ay, *Mirabel* set me on.

Enter Petit.

Pet. Well, sir, how d'ye find yourself?

Dur. You son of a nine-ey'd whore, d'ye come to abuse me? I'll kick you with a vengeance, you dog.

[*Petit runs off, and Dur. after him.*]

A C T III.

S C E N E *continues.**Old Mirabel and the Young.**Old Mir.* **B**O B, come hither, *Bob.**Mir.* Your pleasure, sir?*Old Mir.* Are not you a great rogue, sirrah?*Mir.* That's a little out of my comprehension, sir, for I've heard say, that I resemble my father.*Old Mir.* Your father is your very humble slave—I tell thee what, child, thou art a very pretty fellow, and I love thee heartily; and a very great villain, and I hate thee mortally.*Mir.* Villain, sir! then I must be a very impudent one, for I can't recollect any passage of my life that I'm ashamed of,*Old Mir.* Come hither, my dear friend; do'st see this picture? [*Shews him a little picture.*]*Mir.* *Oriana's*? Pshaw!*Old Mir.* What, sir, won't you look upon't—*Bob*, dear *Bob*, prithee come hither now—Do'st want any money, child?*Mir.* No, sir.*Old Mir.* Why then here's some for thee; come here now—How can'st thou be so hard-hearted, an unnatural, unmannerly rascal (don't mistake me, child, I a'm not angry) as to abuse this tender, lovely, good-natur'd dear rogue?—Why, she sighs for thee, and cries for thee, pouts for thee, and snubs for thee, the poor little heart (if it is like to burst)—Come, my dear boy, be good-natur'd like your own father, be now—and then see here, read this—the effigies of the lovely *Oriana*, with ten thousand pounds to her portion—ten thousand pounds you dog; ten thousand pounds you rogue; how dare you refuse a lady with ten thousand pounds, you impudent rascal:*Mir.* Will you hear me speak, sir?*Old Mir.* Hear you speak, sir! If you had ten thousand tongues, you cou'd not out-talk ten thousand pounds, sir.*Mir.*

Mir. Nay, sir, if you won't hear me I'll be gone, sir! I'll take post for *Italy* this moment.

Old Mir. Ah! the fellow knows I won't part with him. Well, sir, what have you to say?

Mir. The universal reception, sir, that marriage has had in the world, is enough to fix it for a public good, and to draw every body into the common cause; but there are some constitutions, like some instruments, so peculiarly singular, that they make tolerable music by themselves, but never do well in a concert.

Old Mir. Why this is reason, I must confess, but yet it is nonsense too; for tho' you shou'd reason like an angel, if you argue yourself out of a good estate, you talk like a fool.

Mir. But, sir, if you bribe me into bondage with the riches of *Cræsus*, you leave me but a beggar for want of my liberty.

Old Mir. Was ever such a perverse fool heard? 'Sdeath, sir, why did I give you education? was it to dispute me out of my senses? Of what colour now is the head of this cane? You'll say 'tis white, and ten to one make me believe it too—I thought that young fellows studied to get money.

Mir. No, sir, I have study'd to despise it; my reading was not to make me rich, but happy, sir.

Old Mir. There he has me again now. But, sir, did not I marry to oblige you?

Mir. To oblige me, sir, in what respect pray?

Old Mir. Why, to bring you into the world, sir; wasn't that an obligation?

Mir. And because I wou'd have it still an obligation, I avoid marriage.

Old Mir. How is that, sir?

Mir. Because I wou'd not curse the hour I was born.

Old Mir. Look'e, friend, you may persuade me out of my designs, but I'll command you out of yours; and tho' you may convince my reason that you are in the right, yet there is an old attendant of sixty-three, call'd positiveness, which you nor all the wits in *Italy*

shall ever be able to shake: so, sir, you're a wit, and I'm a father; you may talk, but I'll be obey'd.

Mir. This it is to have the son a finer gentleman than the father; they first give us breeding that they don't understand, then they turn us out of doors 'cause we are wiser than themselves. But I'm a little aforehand with the old gentleman. [*Aside.*] Sir, you have been pleas'd to settle a thousand pound sterling a year upon me; in return of which, I have a very great honour for you and you family, and shall take care that your only and beloved son shall do nothing to make him hate his father, or to hang himself. So, dear sir, I'm your very humble servant. [*Runs off.*]

Old Mir. Here, firrah, rogue, *Bob*, villain!

Enter Dugard.

Dug. Ah, sir, 'tis but what he deserves.

Old Mir. 'Tis false, sir, he don't deserve it: what have you to say against my boy, sir?

Dug. I shall only repeat your own words.

Old Mir. What have you to do with my words? I have swallow'd my words already, I have eaten them up, and how can you come at 'em, sir?

Dug. Very easily, sir: 'Tis but mentioning your injur'd ward, and you will throw them up again immediately.

Old Mir. Sir, your sister was a foolish young flirt to trust any such young, deceitful, rake-helly rogue, like him.

Dug. Cry you mercy, old gentleman, I thought we shou'd have the words again.

Old Mir. And what then? 'Tis the way with young fellows to slight an old gentleman's words, you never mind 'em when you ought.—I say, that *Bob's* an honest fellow, and who dares deny it?

Enter Bifarre.

Bis. That dare I, sir:—I say, that your son is a wild, soppyish, whimsical, impertinent coxcomb; and where I abu'd as this gentleman's sister is, I wou'd make it an *Italian* quarrel, and poison the whole family,

Dug. Come, sir, 'tis no time for trifling, my sister is abus'd; you are made sensible of the affront, and your honour is concern'd to see her redress'd.

Old Mir.

Old Mir. Look'e, Mr. *Dugard*, good words go far-thett. I will do your sister justice, but it must be after my own rate: no body must abuse my son but myself. For altho' *Robin* be a sad dog, yet he's no body's puppy but my own.

Bis. Ay, that's my sweet-natur'd, kind old gentleman—[*Wheeling him.*] We will be good then, if you'll join with us in the plot.

Old Mir. Ah, you coaxing young baggage, what plot can you have to wheedle a fellow of sixty-three?

Bis. A plot that sixty-three is only good for, to bring other people together, fir; a *Spanish* plot 'less dangerous 'than that of eighty-eight,' and you must act the *Spaniard*, 'cause your son will least suspect you; and if he shou'd, your authority protects you from a quarrel, to which *Oriana* is unwilling to expose her brother.

Old Mir. And what part will you act in the business, madam?

Bis. Myself, fir; my friend is grown a perfect changeling: these foolish hearts of ours spoil our heads presently; the fellows no sooner turn knaves, but we turn fools: but I am still myself, and he may expect the most severe usage from me, 'cause I neither love him, nor hate him. [Exit.]

Old Mir. Well said, Mrs. Paradox; but, fir, who must open the matter to him?

Dug. Petit. fir, who is our engineer-general. And here he comes.

Enter Petit.

Pet. O fir, more discoveries; are all friends about us?

Dug. Ay, ay, speak freely.

Pet. You must know, fir.—od's my life I'm out of breath; you must know, fir—you must know—

Old Mir. What the devil must we know, fir?

Pet. That I have [*Pants and blows*] brib'd, fir, brib'd—your son's secretary of state!

Old Mir. Secretary of state!—who's that for Heav'n's sake?

Pet. His valet-de-chambre, fir? You must know, fir, that the intrigue lay folded up with his master's clothes, and when he went to dust the embroider'd suit, the se-

cret flew out of the right pocket of his coat, in a whole swarm of your crambo songs, short-footed odes, and long-legg'd Pindarics.

Old Mir. Impossible!

Pet. Ah, sir, he has lov'd her all along; there was *Oriana* in every line, but he hates marriage. Now, sir, this plot will stir up his jealousy, and we shall know by the strength of that how to proceed farther.

Come, sir, lets about it with speed,

'Tis expedition gives our king the sway;

For expedition to the *French* give way;

Swift to attack, or swift—to run away. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Mirabel and Bizarre, passing carelessly by one another.

Bis. [*Aside.*] I wonder what she can see in this fellow to like him?

Mir. [*Aside.*] I wonder what my friend can see in this girl to admire her?

Bis. [*Aside.*] A wild, foppish, extravagant rake-hell.

Mir. [*Aside.*] A light, whimsical, impertinent mad-cap.

Bis. Whom do you mean, sir?

Mir. Whom do you mean, madam?

Bis. A fellow that has nothing left to re-establish him for a human creature, but a prudent resolution to hang himself.

Mir. There is a way, madam, to force me to that resolution.

Bis. I'll do't with all my heart.

Mir. Then you must marry me.

Bis. Look'e, sir, don't think your ill manners to me shall excuse your ill usage of my friend; nor by fixing a quarrel here, to divert my zeal for the absent; for I'm resolv'd, nay, I come prepar'd to make you a panegyric, that shall mortify your pride like any modern dedication.

Mir. And I, madam, like a true modern patron, shall hardly give you thanks for your trouble.

Bis. Come, sir, to let you see what little foundation you have for your dear sufficiency, I'll take you to pieces.

Mir. And what piece will you chuse?

Bis.

Bis. You heart, to be sure; 'cause I shou'd get presently rid on't; your courage I wou'd give to a *Heſter*, your wit to a lewd play-maker, you honour to an attorney, your body to the phyſicians, and your ſoul to its maſter.

Mir. I had the oddeſt dream laſt night of the dutcheſs of *Burgundy*; methought the furbelows of her gown were pinn'd up ſo high behind, that I cou'd not ſee her head for her tail.

Bis. The creature don't mind me! do you think, ſir, that your humourous impertinence can divert me? No, ſir, I'm above any pleaſure that you can give, but that of ſeeing you miſerable. And mark me, ſir, my friend, my injur'd friend, ſhall yet be doubly happy, and you ſhall be a huſband as much as the rites of marriage, and the breach of 'em can make you

[*Here Mirabel pulls out a Virgil, and reads to himſelf while ſhe ſpeaks.*]

Mir. [Reading.] *At Regina dclos, (quis fallere poſſit amantem?)*

Diffimulare etiam ſperâſti, perfide tantum [Very true.]
Poſſe nefas.

By your favour, friend *Virgil*, 'twas but a rascally trick of your hero to forſake poor pug ſo inhumanly.

Bis. I don't know what to ſay to him. The devil—what's *Virgil* to us, ſir?

Mir. Very much, madam, the moſt appropos in the world—for, what ſhou'd I chop upon, but the very place where the perjur'd rogue of a lover and the forſaking lady are battling it tooth and nail. Come, madam, ſpend your ſpirits no longer, we'll take an eaſier method: I'll be *Æneas* now, and you ſhall be *Dido*, and we'll rail by book. Now for you, madam *Dido*.

*Nec te noſter amor, nec te data dextera quondam,
Nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido—*

Ah, poor *Dido*! [Looking at her.]

Bis. Rudeneſs, affronts, impatience! I cou'd almoſt ſtart out even to manhood, and want but a weapon as long as his to fight him upon the ſpot. What ſhall I ſay?

32 THE INCONSTANT; OR,

Mir. Now she rants.

Quæ quibus anteferam? jam jam nec Maxima Juno.

Bis. A man! No, the woman's birth was spirited away.

Mir. Right, right, madam, the very words.

Bis. And some pernicious elf left in the cradle with human shape to palliate growing mischief.

[*Both speak together, and raise their voices by degrees.*

Mir. *Perfide, sed duris genuit te Cautibus borrens*

Caucasus, Hyrcanæque admoxunt Ubera Tigres.

Bis. Go, sir, fly to your midnight revels.—

Mir. [Excellent.] *I sequare Italiam ventis, pete regna per undas,*

Spero equidem mediis, si quid pia Numina possunt.

[*Together again.*

Bis. converse with imps of darkness of your make, your nature starts at justice, and shivers at the touch of virtue. Now the devil take his impudence, he vexes me so, I don't know whether to cry or laugh at him.

Mir. Bravely perform'd, my dear *Libyan*; I'll write the tragedy of *Dido*, and you shall act the part: but you do nothing at all, unless you fret yourself into a fit; for here the poor lady is stifled with vapours, drops into the arms of her maids; and the cruel, barbarous, deceitful wanderer, is in the very next line call'd *Pius Æneas*.—There's authority for ye.

Sorry indeed *Æneas* stood

To see her in a pout;

But *Jove* himself, who ne'er thought good

To stay a second bout,

Commands him off with all his crew,

And leaves poor *Dy*, as I leave you. [*Runs off.*

Bis. Go thy ways, for a dear, mad, deceitful, agreeable fellow. O' my conscience I must excuse *Oriana*.

That lover soon his angry fair disarms,

Whose slighting pleases, and whose faults are charms.

[*Exit.*

Enter Petit, runs about to every door, and knocks.

Pet. Mr. *Mirabel*! Sir, where are you? no where to be found?

Enter

Enter Mirabel.

Mir. What's the matter, *Petit*?

Pet. Most critically met—Ah, sir, that one who has follow'd the game so long, and brought the poor hare just under his paws, should let a mungrel cur chop in, and run away with the puss.

Mir. If your worship can get out of your allegories, be pleas'd to tell me in three words what you mean.

Pet. Plain, plain, sir. Your mistress and mine is going to be marry'd.

Mir. I believe you lye, sir.

Pet. Your humble servant, sir. [*Going.*

Mir. Come hither, *Petit*. Marry'd, say you?

Pet. No, sir, 'tis no matter; I only thought to do you a service, but I shall take care how I confer my favours for the future.

Mir. Sir, I beg ten thousand pardons. [*Bowing low.*

Pet. 'Tis enough, sir,—I come to tell you, sir, that *Oriana* is this moment to be sacrificed; marry'd past redemption.

Mir. I understand her, she'll take a husband out of spite to me, and then out of love to me she will make him a cuckold; 'tis ordinary with women to marry one person for the sake of another, and to throw themselves into the arms of one they hate, to secure their pleasure with the man they love.' But who is the happy man?

Pet. A lord, sir.

Mir. I'm her ladyship's most humble servant; a train and a title, hey! Room for my lady's coach, a front-row in the box for her ladyship; lights, lights for her honour.—Now must I be a constant attender at my lord's levee, to work my way to my lady's couchee—a countess; I presume, sir.—

Pet. A *Spanish* count, sir, that Mr. *Dugard* knew abroad, is come to *Paris*, saw your mistress yesterday, marries her to-day, and whips her into *Spain* to-morrow.

Mir. Ay, is it so? and must I follow my cuckold over the *Pyrenees*? Had she marry'd within the precincts of a billet-doux, I would be the man to lead her to church; but as it happens, I'll forbid the banns. Where is this mighty don?

34 THE INCONSTANT; OR,

Pet. Have a care, fir, he's a rough cross-grained piece, and there's no tampering with him; wou'd you apply to Mr. *Dugard*, or the lady herself, something might be done, for it is despatch to you, that the business it carry'd so hastily. Odo, fir, here he comes. I must be gone. [Exit.]

Enter Old Mir. dressed in a Spanish Habit, leading Oriana.

Ori. Good my lord, a nobler choice had better suited your lordship's merit. My person, rank, and circumstance, expose me as the public theme of raillery, and subject me so to injurious usage, my lord, that I can lay no claim to any part of your regard, except your pity.

Old Mir. Breathes he vital air, that dares presume With rude behaviour to profane such excellence?

Shew me the man——

And you shall see how my sudden revenge
Shall fall upon the head of such presumption.

Is this thing one? [Strutting up to Mirabel.]

Mir. Sir?

Ori. Good my lord.

Old Mir. If he, or any he!

Ori. Pray, my lord, the gentleman's a stranger.

Old Mir. O your pardon, fir,—but if you had—remember, fir,—the lady now is mine, her injuries are mine; therefore, fir, you understand me——Come, madam.

[Leads Oriana to the door, she goes off, Mir. runs to his father, and pulls him by the sleeve.]

Mir. Ecoute, Monsieur le Count.

Old Mir. Your business, fir?

Mir. Boh!

Old Mir. Boh! What language is that, fir?

Mir. Spanish, my lord.

Old Mir. What d'ye mean?

Mir. This, fir.

[Trips up his heels.]

Old Mir. A very concise quarrel, truly—I'll bully him.—*Trinidad Seigneur*, give me fair play.

[Offering to rise.]

Mir. By all means, fir. *[Takes away his sword.]* Now *Seigneur*, where's that bombast look, and fustian face your countship wore just now?

[Strikes him.]

Old

Old Mir. The rogue quarrels well, very well, my own son right!—But hold, firrah, no more jesting; I'm your father, fir, your father.

Mir. My father! Then by this light I could find in my heart to pay thee. [*Afide.*] Is the fellow mad? Why sure, fir, I ha'n't frighted you out of your senses?

Old Mir. But you have, fir.

Mir. Then I'll beat them into you again.

[*Offers to strike him.*]

Old Mir. Why, rogue——*Bob*, dear *Bob*, don't you know me, child!

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! the fellow's downright distracted. Thou miracle of impudence! wou'dst thou make me believe that such a grave gentleman as my father wou'd go a masquerading thus? That a person of threescore and three would run about in a fool's coat to disgrace himself and family? Why, you impudent villain, do you think I will suffer such an affront to pass upon my honour'd father, my worthy father, my dear father? 'Sdeath, fir, mention my father but once again, and I'll send your soul to thy grandfather this minute!

[*Offering to stab him.*]

Old Mir. Well, well, I am not your father.

Mir. Why then, fir, you are the saucy, hectoring *Spaniard*, and I'll use you accordingly.

Old Mir. The devil take the *Spaniards*, fir, we have 'all got nothing bu. blows since we began to take their 'part.'

Enter Dugard, Oriana, Maid, Petit. Dugard runs to Mirabel, the rest to the Old Gentleman.

Dug. Fye, fye, *Mirabel*, murder your father!

Mir. My father! what is the whole family mad? Give me way, fir, I won't be held.

Old Mir. No? nor I neither; let me be gone, pray.

[*Offering to go.*]

Mir. My father!

Old Mir. Ay, you dog's face! I am your father, for I have bore as much for thee, as your mother ever did.

Mir. O ho! then this was a trick, it seems a design, a contrivance, a stratagem!—Oh! how my bones ach!

Old Mir. Your bones firrah, why yours?

Mir.

6 THE INCONSTANT; OR,

Mir. Why, fir, han't I been beating my own flesh and blood all this while ! O, madam, [*To Oriana*] I wish your ladyship joy of your new dignity. Here was a contrivance indeed.

Pet. The contrivance was well enough, fir, for they impos'd upon us all.

Mir. Well my dear *Dulcinea*, did your *Don Quixote* battle for you bravely ? My father will answer for the force of my love.

Ori. Pray, fir, don't insult the misfortunes of your own creating.

Dug. My prudence will be counted cowardice, if I stand tamely now. [*Comes up between Mirabel and his sister.*] Well, fir,

Mir. Well, fir ! Do you take me for one of your tenants, fir, that you put on your landlord face at me ?

Dug. On what presumption, fir, dare you assume thus ? [*Draws.*]

Old Mir. What's that to you, fir.

[*Draws.*]

Pet. Help ! help ! the lady faints.

[*Oriana falls into her Maid's arms.*]

Mir. Vapours ! vapours ! she'll come to herself : If it be an angry fit, a dram of *assa fætida*——If jealousy, harts horn in water——If the mother, burnt feathers——If grief, *ratifia*——If it be strait stays, or corns, there's nothing like a dram of plain brandy. [*Exit.*]

Ori. 'Hold off, give me air'——O my brother, would you preserve my life, endanger not your own ; would you defend my reputation, leave it to itself ; 'tis a dear vindication that's purchas'd by the sword ; for tho' our champion proves victorious, yet our honour is wounded.

Old Mir. Ay, and your lover may be wounded, that's another thing. But I think you are pretty brisk again, my child.

Ori. Ay, fir, my indisposition was only a pretence to divert the quarrel ; the capricious taste of your sex excuses this artifice in ours.

*For often when our chief perfections fail,
Our chief defects with foolish men prevail.*

[*Exit.*]

Pet.

Pet. Come, Mr. *Dugard*, take courage, there is a way still left to fetch him again.

Old Mir. Sir, I'll have no plot that has any relation to *Spain*.

Dug. I scorn all artifice whatsoever; my sword shall do her justice.

Pet. Pretty justice, truly! suppose you run him thro' the body; you run her thro' the heart at the same time.

Old Mir. And me thro' the head—rot your sword, sir, we'll have plots; come, *Petit*, let's hear.

Pet. What if she pretended to go into a nunnery, and so bring him about to declare himself?

Dug. That I must confess has a face.

Old Mir. A face! a face like an angel, sir, ad's my life, sir, 'tis the most beautiful plot in *Christendom*. We'll about it immediately.

[*Exeunt.*]

‘ S C E N E, *The Street.*

‘ *Duretete and Mirabel.*

‘ *Dur.* [*In a passion.*] And tho' I can't dance, nor sing, nor talk like you, yet I can fight, you know I can, sir.

‘ *Mir* I know thou can'st, man.

‘ *Dur.* 'Sdeath, sir, and I will: let me see the proudest man alive make a jest of me?

‘ *Mir* But I'll engage to make you amends.

‘ *Dur.* Danc'd to death! Baited like a bear! Ridiculous! Threaten'd to be kick'd! Confusion! sir, you set me on, and I will have satisfaction; all mankind will point at me.

‘ *Mir.* [*Aside.*] I must give this thunderbolt some passage, or 'twill break upon my own head—Look'e,

‘ *Duretete*, what do these gentlemen laugh at?

‘ *Enter two gentlemen.*

‘ *Dur.* At me, to be sure—Sir, what made you laugh at me?

‘ 1 *Gen.* You're mistaken, sir, if we were merry, we had a private reason.

‘ 2 *Gen.* Sir, we don't know you.

‘ *Dur.* Sir, I'll make you know me; mark and observe me, I won't be nam'd; it shan't be mention'd, not even whisper'd in your prayers at church. 'Sdeath, sir, d'ye smile?

‘ 1 *Gen.* Not I, upon my word.

‘ *Dur.*

A C T IV.

S C E N E, *Old Mirabel's House.**Enter Old Mirabel and Dugard.*

Dug. **T**HE Lady Abbess is my relation, and privy to the plot. 'Your son has been there, but 'had no admittance beyond the privilege of the grate, 'and there my sister refus'd to see him. He went off 'more nettled at his repulse, than I thought his gaiety 'could admit.'

Old Mir. Ay, ay, this nunnery will bring him about, I warrant ye.

Enter Duretete.

Dur. Here, where are you all!—O! Mr. *Mirabel*, you have done fine things for your posterity—And you, Mr. *Dugard*, may come to answer this—I come to demand my friend at your hands; restore him, sir, or—[*To Old Mir.*

Old Mir. Restore him! What d'ye think I have got him in my trunk or in my pocket!

Dur. Sir, he's mad, and you're the cause on't.

Old Mir. That may be; for I was as mad as he when I begot him.

Dug. Mad, sir, what d'ye mean?

Dur. What do you mean, sir, by shutting up your sister to talk like a parrot thro' a cage? Or a decoy-duck, to draw others into a snare? Your son, sir, because she has deserted him, he has forsaken the world! and in three words, has——

Old Mir. Hang'd himself!

Dur. The very same, turn'd friar.

Old Mir. You lie, sir, 'tis ten times worse. *Bob* turn'd friar! Why should the fellow shave his foolish crown when the same razor may cut his throat?

Dur. If you have any command, or you any interest over him, lose not a minute: He has thrown himself into the next monastery, and has order'd me to pay off his servants, and discharge his equipage.

Old Mir. Let me alone to ferret him out; I'll sacrifice the Abbot, if he receives him; I'll try whether the
spiritual

spiritual or the natural father has the most right to the child.—But, dear captain, what has he done with his estate?

Dur. Settled it upon the church, sir.

Old Mir. The church! nay, then the devil won't get him out of their clutches—Ten thousand livres a year upon the church! 'tis downright sacrilege—Come, gentlemen, all hands to work; for half that sum, one of these monasteries shall protect you a traitor from the law, a rebellious wife from her husband, and a disobedient son from his own father. [Exit.

Dug. But will ye persuade me that he's gone to a monastery?

Dur. Is your sister gone to the *Filles Repenties*? I tell you, sir, she's not fit for the society of repenting maids.

Dug. Why so, sir?

Dur. Because she's neither one nor t'other; she's too old to be a maid, and too young to repent.

[Exit *Dug.* after him.

SCENE, *the Inside of a Monastery*; Oriana in a Nun's habit; Bifarre.

Ori. I hope, *Bifarre*, there is no harm in jesting with this religious habit.

Bis. To me, the greatest jest in the habit, is taking it in earnest: I don't understand this imprisoning people with the keys of *Paradise*, nor the merit of that virtue which comes by constraint.—Besides, we may own to one another, that we are in the worst company when among ourselves; for our private thoughts run us into those desires, which our pride resists from the attack of the world; and, you may remember, the first woman met the devil when she retir'd from her man.

Ori. But I'm reconcil'd, methinks to the mortification of a nunnery; because I fancy the habit becomes me.

Bis. A well-contriv'd mortification, truly, that makes a woman look ten times handsomer than she did before!
 '—Ay, my dear, were there any religion in becoming
 'dresses, our sex's devotion were rightly plac'd; for our
 'toilets would do the work of the altar; we shou'd all
 'be canoniz'd.

Ori.

' *Ori.* But don't you think there is a great deal of merit in dedicating a beautiful face and person to the service of religion?

' *Bis.* Not half so much as devoting 'em to a pretty fellow: if our feminality had no business in this world, why was it sent hither? Let us dedicate our beautiful minds to the service of Heaven. And for our handsome persons, they become a box at the play, as well as a pew in the church.

' *Ori.* But the vicissitude of fortune, the inconstancy of man, with other disappointments of life, require some place of religion, for a refuge from their persecution.

' *Bis.* Ha, ha, ha! and do you think there is any devotion in a fellow's going to church, when he takes it only for a sanctuary? Don't you know that religion consists in charity with all mankind, and that you should never think of being friends with Heaven, till you have quarrelled with all the world? Come, come, mind your business, *Mirabel* loves you, 'tis now plain, and hold him to't; give fresh orders that he shan't see you: we get more by hiding our faces sometimes, than by exposing them; a very mask, you see, whets desire; but a pair of keen eyes thro' an iron grate fire double upon 'em, with view and disguise. But I must be gone upon my affairs, I have brought my captain about again.

' *Ori.* But why will you trouble yourself with that coxcomb?

' *Bis.* Because he is a coxcomb; had I not better have a lover like him, that I can make an ass of, than a lover like yours, to make a fool of me. [*Knocking below.*] A message from *Mirabel*, I'll lay my life. [*She runs to the door.*] Come hither, run, thou charming nun come hither.

' *Ori.* What's the news? [*Runs to her.*

' *Bis.* Don't you see who's below?

' *Ori.* I see no body but a friar.

' *Bis.* Ah! thou poor blind *Cupid*! O' my conscience, these hearts of ours spoil our heads instantly! the fellows no sooner turn knaves, than we turn fools. A friar! Don't you see a villainous genteel mein under that cloak of hypocrisy, the loose careless air of a tall rake-helly fellow?

Ori.

Ori. As I live, *Mirabel* turn'd friar! I hope, in Heaven, he's not in earnest.

Bis. In earnest: ha, ha, ha! are you in earnest? Now's your time; this disguise has he certainly taken for a passport, to get in and try your resolutions; stick to your habit, to be sure; treat him with disdain, rather than anger; for pride becomes us more than passion: remember what I say, if you wou'd yield to advantage, and hold out the attack; to draw him on, keep him off to be sure.

*The cunning gamesters never gain too fast,
But lose at first, to win the more at last.* [Exit.

Ori. His coming puts me into some ambiguity. I don't know how; I don't fear him, but I mistrust myself; wou'd he were not come, yet I wou'd not have him gone neither; I am afraid to talk with him, but I love to see him tho'.

*'What a strange power has this fantastic fire,
'That makes us dread even what we most desire!'*

Enter Mirabel in a Friar's habit.

Mir. Save you, sister—Your brother, young lady, having a regard for your soul's health, has sent me to prepare you for the sacred habit by confession.

Ori. That's false, the cloven foot already. [*Aside.*] My brother's care I own; and to you, sacred sir, I confess, that the great crying sin which I have long indulg'd, and now prepare to expiate, was love. 'My morning thoughts, my evening prayers, my daily musings, 'nightly cares, was love! my present peace, my future bliss, the joy of earth, and hopes of Heaven! I all 'contemn'd for love!'

Mir. She's downright stark mad in earnest; death and confusion, I have lost her! [*Aside.*] You confess your fault, madam, in such moving terms, that I could almost be in love with the sin.

Ori. Take care, sir; crimes, like virtues, are their own rewards; my chief delight became my only grief; he in whose breast I thought my heart secure, turn'd robber, and despoil'd the treasure that he kept.

Mir. Perhaps that treasure he esteems so much, that like the miser, tho' afraid to use it, he reserves it safe.

Ori.

Ori. No, holy father : who can be miser in another's wealth, that's prodigal of his own ? His heart was open, shar'd to all he knew, and what, alas ! must then become of mine ! But the same eyes that drew this passion in, shall send it out in tears, to which now hear my vow.—

Mir. [*Discovering himself.*] No, my fair angel, but let me repent ; here on my knees behold the criminal, that vows repentance his. Ha ! no concern upon her !

Ori. This turn is odd, and the time has been, that such a sudden change wou'd have surpris'd me into some confusion.

Mir. Restore that happy time, for I am now re- turn'd to myself, for I want but pardon to deserve your favour, and here I'll fix till you relent and give it.

Ori. Groveling, sordid man ; why would you act a thing to make you kneel, monarch in your pleasures to be slave to your faults ? Are all the conquests of your wand'ring sway, your wit, your humour, fortune, all reduc'd to the base cringing of a bended knee ? Servile and poor ! Pray Heav'n this change be real. [*Aside.*

Mir. I come not here to justify my fault but my submission, for tho' there be a meanness in this humble posture, 'tis nobler still to bend when justice calls, than to resist conviction.

Ori. No more—thy oft repeated violated words reproach my weak belief, 'tis the severest calumny to hear thee speak ; that humble posture which once cou'd raise, now mortifies my pride ; how can'st thou hope for pardon from one that you affront by asking it ?

Mir. [*Rises.*] In my own cause I'll plead no more, but give me leave to intercede for you against the hard injunctions of that habit, which for my fault you wear.

Ori. Surprising insolence ! My greatest foe, pretends to give me counsel ; but I am too warm upon so cool a subject. My resolutions, sir, are fix'd ! but as our hearts were united with the ceremony of our eyes, so I shall spare some tears to the separation. [*Weeps.*] That's all ; farewell.

Mir. And must I lose her ? No. [*Runs and catches her.*] Since all my prayers are vain, I'll use the nobler argument of man, and force you to the justice you refuse ; you're mine by pre-contract : and where's the vow so sacred

' sacred to disannul another? I'll urge my love, your oath, and plead my cause 'gainst all monastic shifts upon the earth.

' *Ori.* Unhand me, ravisher! Wou'd you prophane these holy walls with violence? Revenge for all my past disgrace now offers, thy life shou'd answer this, wou'd I provoke the law: urge me no farther, but be gone.

' *Mir.* Inexorable woman, let me kneel again. [*Kneels.*]

Enter Old Mirabel.

Old Mir. Where, where's this counterfeit nun?

Ori. Madness! confusion! I'm ruin'd!

Mir. What do I hear? [*Puts on his hood.*] What did you say, sir!

Old Mir. I say she's a counterfeit, and you may be another for ought I know, sir; I have lost my child by these tricks, sir.

Mir. What tricks, sir?

Old Mir. By a pretended trick, sir. A contrivance to bring my son to reason, and it has made him stark mad; I have lost him and a thousand pound a year.

Mir. [*Discovering himself.*] My dear father, I'm your most humble servant.

Old Mir. My dear boy, [*Runs and kisses him.*] 'Welcome *ex inferis*, my dear boy,' 'tis all a trick, she's no more a nun than I am.

Mir. No!

Old Mir. The devil a bit.

Mir. Then kiss me again, my dear dad, for the most happy news—And now most venerable holy sister. [*Kneels.*]

*Your mercy and your pardon I implore,
For the offence of asking it before.*

Look'e, my dear counterfeiting nun, take my advice: be a nun in good earnest; women make the best nuns always when they can't do otherwise. 'Ah my dear father, there is a merit in your son's behaviour that you little think; the free deportment of such fellows as I, makes more ladies religious, than all the pulpits in France.'

Ori. O! Sir, how unhappily have you destroy'd what was so near perfection! He is the counterfeit that has deceiv'd you.

Old Mir. Ha! Look'e, sir, I recant, she is a nun.

Mir. Sir, your humble servant, then I'm a friar this moment.

Old Mir. Was ever an old fool so banter'd by a brace o' young ones; hang you both, you're both counterfeits, and my plot's spoil'd, that's a'l. [Exit.

Ori. Shame and confusion, love, anger, and disappointment, will work my brain to madness.

[Takes off her habit. Exit.

Mir. Ay, ay, throw by the rags, they have serv'd a turn for us both, and they shall e'en go off together.

[Takes off his habit.

' Thus the sick wretch, when tortur'd by his pain,
' And finding all essays for life are vain;
' When the physician can no more design,
' Then call the other doctor, the divine.
' What vows to Heaven, wou'd Heaven restore his health!
' Vows all to Heaven, his thoughts, his actions, wealth:
' But if restor'd to vigour as before,
' His health refuses what his sickness swore.
' The body is no sooner rais'd and well,
' But the weak soul relapses into ill;
' To all its former swing of life is led,
' And leaves its vows and promises in bed.'

[Exit, throwing away the habit.

SCENE changes to *Old Mirabel's house*: *Duretete* with a letter.

Dur. [Reads.]

MY rudeness was only a proof of your humour, which I have found so agreeable, that I own myself penitent, and willing to make any reparation upon your first appearance to

BISARRE.

Mirabel swears she loves me, and this confirms it; then farewell gallantry, and welcome revenge; 'tis my turn now to be upon the sublime, I'll take her off, I warrant her.

Enter *Bisarre*.

Well, mistress, do you love me?

Bis. I hope, sir, you will pardon the modesty of—

Dur. Of what? of a dancing devil!—Do you love me, I say?

Bis.

Bis. Perhaps I—

Dur. What?

Bis. Perhaps I do not.

Dur. Ha! abus'd again! Death, woman, I'll—

Bis. Hold, hold, fir, I do, I do!

Dur. Confirm it then by your obedience, stand there; and ogle me now, as if your heart, blood and soul were like to fly out at your eyes—First, the direct surprise [*She looks full upon him.*] Right; next the *Deux yeux par oblique*. [*She gives him the side glance,*] Right; now depart, and languish. [*She turns from him and looks over her shoulder.*] Very well; now sigh. [*She sighs.*] Now drop your fan on purpose. [*She drops her fan.*] Now take it up again: Come now, confess your faults; are not you a proud—say after me.

Bis. Proud.

Dur. Impertinent.

Bis. Impertinent.

Dur. Ridiculous.

Bis. Ridiculous.

Dur. Flirt.

Bis. Puppy.

Dur. Zoons! Woman, don't provoke me, we are alone, and you don't know but the devil may tempt me to do you a mischief; ask my pardon immediately.

Bis. I do, fir, I only mistook the word.

Dur. Cry then, have you got e'er a handkerchief?

Bis. Yes, fir.

Dur. Cry then, handsomely; cry like a queen in a tragedy. [*She pretending to cry, bursts out a laughing, and enter two ladies laughing.*]

Bis. Ha, ha, ha!

Ladies both. Ha, ha, ha!

Dur. Hell broke loose upon me, and all the furies flutter'd about my ears! Betray'd again?

Bis. That you are upon my word, my dear captain; ha, ha, ha!

Dur. The Lord deliver me.

1 Lady. What! Is this the mighty man with the bull-face that comes to frighten ladies? I long to see him angry; come begin.

Dur. Ah, madam, I'm the best natur'd fellow in the world.

2 Lady.

2 *Lady*. A man ! we're mistaken, a man has manners ; the awkward creature is some tinker's trull in a periwig.

Bis. Come, ladies, let's examine him.

[*They lay hold on him.*]

Dur. Examine ! the devil you will !

Bis. I'll lay my life, some great dairy maid in man's clothes.

Dur. They will do't ;—look'e, dear christian women, pray hear me.

Bis. Will you ever attempt a lady's honour again ?

Dur. If you please to let me get away with my honour, I'll do any thing in the world.

Bis. Will you persuade your friend to marry mine ?

Dur. O yes, to be sure.

Bis. And will you do the same by me ?

Dur. Burn me if I do, if the coast be clear. [*Runs out.*]

Bis. Ha, ha, ha ! the visit, ladies, was critical for our diversions, we'll go make an end of our tea. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Mirabel and Old Mirabel.

Mir. Your patience, sir, I tell you I won't marry ; and tho' you send all the bishops in *France* to persuade me, I shall never believe their doctrine against their practice.

Old Mir. But will you disobey your father, sir ?

Mir. Wou'd my father have his youthful son lie lazing here, bound to a wife, chain'd like a monkey to make sport to a woman, subject to her whims, humours, longings, vapours, and caprices, 'to have her one day 'pleas'd, to-morrow peevish, the next day mad, the fourth rebellious ; and nothing but this succession of 'impertinence for ages together.' Be merciful, sir, to your own flesh and blood.

Old Mir. But, sir, did not I bear all this, why should not you ?

Mir. Then thou think that marriage, like treason, shall attain the whole body ; pray consider, sir, is it reasonable because you throw yourself down from one story, that I must cast myself headlong from the garret window ? You wou'd compel me to that state, which I have heard you curse yourself, when my mother and you have battled it for a whole week together.

Old Mir. Never but once, you rogue, and that was when she long'd for six *Flanders* mares : ay, sir, then she

she was breeding of you, which shew'd what an expensive dog I should have of you.

Enter Petit.

Well, *Petit*, how does she now?

Pet. Mad, sir, *con pompos*—Ay, Mr. *Mirabel*, you'll believe that I speak truth, now when I confess that I have told you hitherto nothing but lies; our jesting is come to a sad earnest, she's downright distracted.

Enter Bifarre.

Bis. Where is this mighty victor!—The great exploit is done; go triumph in the glory of your conquest, inhuman, barbarous man! O Sir, [*To the old gentleman*] your wretched ward has found a tender guardian of you, where her young innocence expected protection, here has she found her ruin.

Old. Mir. Ay the fault is mine, for I believe that rogue won't marry, for fear of begetting such another disobedient son as his father did. I have done all I can madam, and now can do no more than run mad for company. [*Cries*]

Enter Dugard with his sword drawn.

Dug. Away! Revenge, revenge.

Old Mir. Patience, patience, sir. [*Old Mir. holds him.*
Bob, draw. [*Aside.*

Dug. Patience! The coward's virtue, and the brave man's failing, when thus provok'd—Villain!

Mir. Your sister's frenzy shall excuse your madness; and to shew my concern for what she suffers, I'll bear the villain from her brother—Put up your anger with your sword; I have a heart like your's, that swells at an affront receiv'd, but melts at an injury given; and if the lovely *Oriana's* grief be such a moving scene, 'twill find a part within this breast, perhaps as tender as a brother's.

Dug. To prove that soft compassion for her grief, endeavour to remove it.—There, there, behold an object that's infective; I cannot view her, but I am as mad as she: [*Enter Oriana, held by two maids who put her in a chair.*]

chair.] A sister that my dying parents left, with their last words and blessing to my care. Sister, dearest sister. [*Goes to her.*]

Old Mir. Ay, poor child, poor child, d'ye know me?

Ori. You! you are *Amadis de Gaul*, sir;—Oh! oh my heart! Were you never in love, fair lady? And do you never dream of flowers and gardens?—I dream of walking fires, and tall gigantic fights. Take heed, it comes now—What's that? Pray stand away: I have seen that face sure.—How light my head is!

Mir. What piercing charms has beauty, ev'n in madness! 'these sudden starts of undigested words shoot thro' my soul, with more persuasive force than all the studied art of labour'd eloquence.'—Come, madam, try to repose a little.

Ori. I cannot; for I must be up to go to church, and I must dress me, put on my new gown, and be so fine, to meet my love. Hey ho!—Will not you tell me where my heart lies buried?

Mir. My very soul is touch'd—Your hand, my fair.

Ori. How soft and gentle you feel? I'll tell you your fortune, friend.

Mir. How she stares upon me!

Ori. You have a flattering face; but 'tis a fine one—I warrant you have five hundred mistresses—Ay, to be sure, a mistress for every guinea in his pocket—Will you pray for me? I shall die to-morrow—And will you ring my passing-bell?

Mir. O woman, woman, of artifice created! whose nature, even distracted, has a cunning: In vain let man his sense, his learning boast, when woman's madness over rules his reason. Do you know me injur'd creature?

Ori. No—but you shall be my intimate acquaintance—in the grave. [*Weeps.*]

Mir. O tears, I must believe you; sure there's a kind of sympathy in madness: for even I, obdurate as I am, do feel my soul so toss'd with storms of passion, that I could cry for help as well as she.— [*Wipes his eyes.*]

Ori. What have you lost your lover? No, you mock me; I'll go home and pray.

Mir. Stay, my fair innocence, and hear me own my love so loud, that I may call your senses to their place, restore 'em to their charming happy functions, and re-instate myself into your favour.

Bis. Let her alone, sir, 'tis all too late; she trembles, hold her, her fits grow stronger by her talking; don't trouble her, she don't know you, sir.

Old Mir. Not know him! what then? she loves to see him for all that.

Enter Duretete.

Dur. Where are you all? What the devil! melancholy, and I here! Are ye sad, and such a ridiculous subject, such a very good jest among you as I am?

Mir. Away with this impertinence; this is no place for bagatel: I have murder'd my honour, destroy'd a lady, and my desire of reparation is come at length too late: see there.

Dur. What ails her?

Mir. Alas! she's mad.

Dur. Mad! do'st wonder at that? By this light, they're all so; they're cozening mad; they're brawling mad; they're proud mad; I just now came from a whole world of mad women, that had almost—What is she dead?

Mir. Dead! Heav'ns forbid.

Dur. Heav'ns further it; for till they be as cold as a key, there's no trusting them; you're never sure that a woman's in earnest, 'till she is nail'd in her coffin. Shall I talk to her? Are you mad, mistress?

Bis. What's that to you, sir?

Dur. Oons, madam, are you there! [*Runs off*]

Mir. Away, thou wild buffoon; how poor and mean this humour now appears? 'His follies and my own I here disclaim;' this lady's frenzy has restor'd my senses, and was she perfect now, as once she was (before ye all I speak it) she should be mine; and as she is, my tears and prayers shall wed her.

Dug. How happy had this declaration been some hours ago.

Bis. Sir, she beckons to you, and waves us to go off; come, come, let's leave 'em [*Ex. omnes, but Mir. and Ori.*]

Ori. O sir.

Mir.

Mir. Speak, my charming angel, if your dear senses have regain'd their order; speak, fair, and bless me with the news.

Ori. First, let me bless the cunning of my sex, that happy counterfeited frenzy that has restor'd to my poor labouring breast the dearest, best lov'd of men.

Mir. Tune all ye spheres, your instruments of joy, and carry round your spacious orbs, the happy sound of *Oriana's* health; her soul, whose harmony was next to yours, is now in tune again; the counterfeiting fair has play'd the fool.

She was so mad to counterfeit for me;

I was so mad to pawn my liberty:

But now we both are well, and both are free.

}

Ori. How, sir, free!

Mir. As air, my dear bedlamite; what, marry a lunatick! Look ye, my dear, you have counterfeited madness so very well this bout, that you'll be apt to play the fool all your life long—Here, gentlemen.

Ori. Monster! you won't disgrace me.

Mir. O' my faith, but I will; here, come in gentlemen.—A miracle! a miracle! the woman's dispossest'd, the devil's vanish'd.

Enter Old Mirabel and Dugard.

Old Mir. Bless us, was she possest'd?

Mir. With the worst of demons, sir, a marriage-devil, a horrid devil. *Mr. Dugard*, don't be surpriz'd, I promis'd my endeavours to cure your sister; no mad doctor in Christendom could have done it more effectually. Take her into your charge; and have a care she don't relapse; if she should, employ me not again, for I am no more infallible than others of the faculty; I do cure sometimes.

Ori. Your remedy, most barbarous man, 'will prove the greatest poison to my health; for tho' my former frenzy was but counterfeit, I now shall run into a real madness.

[Exit Old Mir. after.

Dug. This was a turn beyond my knowledge; I'm so confus'd, I know not how to resent it.

[Exit.

Mir. What a dangerous precipice have I escap'd? Was not I just now upon the brink of destruction?

Enter Duretete.

O my friend, let me run into thy bosom; no lark, escap'd from the devouring pounces of a hawk, quakes with more dismal apprehension.

Dur. The matter, man!

Mir. Marriage, hanging; I was just at the gallows-foot, the running noose about my neck, and the cart wheeling from me.—Oh—I shan't be myself this month again,

Dur. Did not I tell you so? They are all alike, saints or devils: their counterfeiting can't be reputed a deceit, for 'tis the nature of the sex, not their contrivance.

Mir. Ay, ay: there's no living here with security; this house is so full of stratagem and design, that I must abroad again.

Dur. With all my heart, I'll bear thee company, my lad; I'll meet you at the play; and we'll set out for *Italy* to-morrow morning.

Mir. A match; I'll go pay my compliment of leave to my father presently.

Dur. I'm afraid he'll stop you.

Mir. What pretend a command over me after his settlement of a thousand pound a year upon me? No, no, he has pass'd away his authority with the conveyance; the will of a living father is chiefly obeyed for the sake of the dying one.

- ' What makes the world attend and croud the great?
- ' Hopes, interest, and dependence, make their state:
- ' Behold the anti-chamber fill'd with beaux,
- ' A horse's levee throng'd with courtly crows.
- ' Tho' grumbling subjects make the crown their sport,
- ' Hopes of a place will bring the sparks to court.
- ' Dependence, ev'n a father's sway secures,
- ' For tho' the son rebels, the heir is yours.' [*Exeunt.*

A C T V.

SCENE, *the Street before the Play-House.**Mirabel and Duretete as coming from the Play.**Dur.* **H**OW d'ye like this play?*Mir.* I lik'd the company; the lady, the rich beauty in the front-box had my attention: these impudent poets bring the ladies together to support them, and to kill every body else.*For deaths upon the stage the ladies cry,**But ne'er mind us that in the audience die:**'The poet's hero should not move their pain,**'But they shou'd weep for those their eyes have slain.'**Dur.* Hoyty, toyty; did *Phillis* inspire you with all this?*Mir.* Ten times more; the play-house is the element of poetry, because the region of beauty; the ladies, methinks, have a more triumphant air in the boxes than any where else, they sit commanding on their thrones with all their subject slaves about them: their best clothes, best looks, shining jewels, sparkling eyes, the treasure of the world in a ring. Then there's such a hurry of pleasure to transport us; the bustle, noise, gallantry, 'equipage, garters, feathers, wigs,' bows, smiles, ogles, love, music, and applause: I could wish that my whole life long were the first night of a new play.*Dur.* The fellow has quite forgot this journey; have you bespoke post horses?*Mir.* Grant me but three days, dear captain, one to discover the lady, one to unfold myself, and one to make me happy; and then I'm yours to the world's end.*Dur.* Hast thou the impudence to promise thyself a lady of her figure and quality in so short a time?*Mir.* Yes, sir—I have a confident address, no disagreeable person, and five hundred lewis d'ors in my pocket.*Dur.* Five hundred lewis d'ors! You a'n't mad?

Mir. I tell you, she's worth five thousand; one of her black brilliant eyes is worth a diamond as big as her head. 'I compar'd her necklace with her looks, and the living jewels out-sparkled the dead ones by a million.'

Dur. But you have own'd to me, that abating *Oriana's* pretensions to marriage, you lov'd her passionately; then how can you wander at this rate?

Mir. I long'd for a partridge t'other day off the king's plate, but d'ye think, because I could not have it, I must eat nothing.

Dur. Prithee, *Mirabel*, be quiet; you may remember what narrow 'scapes you have had abroad by following strangers; you forget your leap out of the Courtesan's window at *Bologna*, to save your fine ring there.

Mir. My ring's a trifle, there's nothing we possess comparable to what we desire——be shy of a lady bare-fac'd in the front-box with a thousand pounds in jewels about her neck!—For shame, no more.

Enter Oriana in Boy's Clothes with a Letter.

Ori. Is your name, *Mirabel*, sir?

Mir. Yes, sir.

Ori. A letter from your uncle in *Picardy*.

[*Gives the letter.*]

Mir. [*Reads.*]

THE bearer is the son of a Protestant gentleman, who flying for his religion, left me the charge of this youth, [a pretty boy.] He's fond of some handsome service that may afford him opportunity of improvement; your care of him will oblige
Your's.

Has't a mind to travel child?

Ori. 'Tis my desire, sir; I should be pleas'd to serve a traveller in any capacity.

Mir. A hopeful inclination; you shall along with me into *Italy*, as my page.

Dur. 'I don't think it safe, the rogue's [*Noise without.*] too handsome.'——The play's done, and some of the ladies come this way.

Enter Lamorce, with her train born up by a Page.

Mir. *Duretete*, the very dear, identical she.

Dur. And what then?

Mir.

Mir. Why 'tis she.

Dur. And what then, fir?

Mir. Then! Why—Look'e, firrah, the first piece of service I put on you, is to follow that lady's coach, and bring me word where she lives. [*To Oriana.*]

Ori. I don't know the town, fir, and am afraid of losing myself.

Mir. Pshaw.

Lam. Page, what's become of all my people?

Page. I can't tell, madam, I can see no sign of your ladyship's coach.

Lam. That fellow is got into his old pranks, and fall'n drunk somewhere; none of the footmen there?

Page. Not one, madam.

Lam. These servants are the plague of our lives, what shall I do?

Mir. By all my hopes, fortune pimps for me; now *Duretete* for a piece of gallantry.

Dur. Why you won't sure?

Mir. Won't, brute! Let not your servants neglect, madam, put your ladyship to any inconvenience, for you can't be disappointed of an equipage whilst mine waits below; and wou'd you honour, the master so far, he would be proud to pay his attendance.

Dur. Ay to be sure.

[*Aside.*]

Lam. Sir, I won't presume to be troublesome, for my habitation is a great way off.

Dur. Very true, madam, and he's a little engag'd, besides, madam, a hackey-coach will do as well, madam.

Mir. Rude beast, be quiet! [*To Duretete.*] The farther from home, madam, the more occasion you have for a guard—pray, madam—

Lam. Lard, fir.—[*He seems to press, she to decline it in dumb show.*]

Dur. Ah! the devil's in his impudence; now he wheedles, she smiles; he flatters, she simpers; he swears, she believes; he's a rogue, and she's a w—in a moment.

Mir. Without there! my coach; *Duretete*, with me joy. [*Hands the Lady out.*]

Dur. Wish you a surgeon! Here you little *Picará*, go follow your master, and he'll lead you—

Ori. Whither, sir?

Dur. To the academy, child: 'tis the fashion, with men of quality, to teach their pages their exercises—go.

Ori. Won't you go with him too, sir; that woman may do him some harm, I don't like her.

Dur. Why, how now Mr. *Page*, do you start up to give laws of a sudden; do you pretend to rise at court, and disapprove the pleasure of your betters: Look'e, sirrah, if ever you wou'd rise by a great man, be sure to be with him in his little actions, and, as a step to your advancement, follow your master immediately, and make it your hope that he goes to a bawdy-house.

Ori. Heav'ns forbid. [Exit.

Dug. Now wou'd I sooner take a cart in company of the hangman, than a coach with that woman: what a strange antipathy have I taken against these creatures; a woman to me is aversion upon aversion, a cheese, a cat, a breast of mutton, the squalling of children, the grinding of knives, and the snuff of a candle. [Exit.

S C E N E, *a handsome apartment.*

Enter Mirabel and Lamorce.

Lam. To convince me, sir, that your service was something more than good breeding, please to lay out an hour of your company upon my desire, as you have already upon my necessity.

Mir. Your desire, madam, has only prevented my request: my hours! make 'em yours, madam, eleven twelve, one, two, three, and all that belong to those happy minutes.

Lam. But I must trouble you, sir, to dismiss your retinue, because an equipage at my door, at this time of night, will not be consistent with my reputation.

Mir. By all means, madam, all but one little boy—Here, *Page*, [*Enter Oriana*] order my coach and servants home, and do you stay; 'tis a foolish country boy, that knows nothing but innocence. [Exit Oriana.

Lam. Innocence, sir? I should be sorry if you made any sinister constructions of my freedom.

Mir. O madam, I must not pretend to remark upon any body's freedom, having so entirely forfeited my own.

Lam.

Lam. Well, sir, 'twere convenient towards our easy correspondence, that we enter'd into a free confidence of each other, by a mutual declaration of what we are, and what we think of one another.—Now, sir, what are you?

Mir. In three words, madam,—I am am a gentleman, I have five hundred pounds in my pocket, and a clean shirt on.

Lam. And your name is——

Mir. Mustapha.—Now, madam, the inventory of your fortunes.

Lam. My name is *Lamorce*; my birth noble; I was married young, to a proud, rude, sullen, impetuous fellow; the husband spoiled the gentlemen; crying ruin'd my face, 'till at last I took heart, leap'd out of a window, got away to my friends, su'd my tyrant, and recovered my fortune—I liv'd from fifteen to twenty to please a husband; from twenty to forty I'm resolv'd to please myself, and from thence upwards I'll humour the world.

Mir. The charming wild notes of a bird broke out of its cage.

Lam. I mark'd you at the play, and something I saw of a well-furnish'd, careless, agreeable tour about you. Methought your eyes made their mannerly demands with such an arch modesty, that I don't know how—but I'm elop'd. Ha, ha, ha! I'm elop'd.'

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! I rejoice in your good fortune with all my heart.

Lam. O, now I think on't, Mr. *Mustapha*, you have got the finest ring there, I cou'd scarcely believe it right; pray let me see it.

Mir. Hum! Yes, madam, 'tis, 'tis right—but, but, but, but, but, it was given me by my mother, an old family ring, madam, an old-fashion'd family-ring.

Lam. Ay, sir—If you can entertain yourself 'with a song' for a moment, I'll wait on you immediately; 'come in there.

[Exit.

'Enter Singers.

'Call what you please, sir.

'*Mir.* The new song.—*Prithee*, Phillis,

'S O N G.'

C 4.

Mir.

Mir. Certainly the stars have been in a strange intriguing humour when I was born—Ay, this night shou'd I have had a bride in my arms, and that I shou'd like well enough: But what shou'd I have to-morrow night? The same. And what next night? The same. And what next night? The very same: Soup for breakfast, soup for dinner, soup for supper, and soup for breakfast again—But here's variety.

*' I love the fair who freely gives her heart,
' That's mine by ties of nature, not of art;
' Who boldly owns whate'er her thoughts indite,
' And is too modest for a hypocrite.'*

[*Lamorce appears at the door, as he runs towards her, four Bravoes step in before her. He starts back.*

She comes, she comes—Hum, hum—Bitch—Murder'd, murder'd to be sure? The cursed strumpet! To make me send away my servants—Nobody near me! These cut-throats always make sure work. What shall I do? I have but one way. [*Aside*] Are these gentlemen your relations, madam?

Lam. Yes, sir.

Mir. Gentlemen your most humble servant; sir, your most faithful, yours, sir, with all my heart; your most obedient—come, gentlemen, [*Salutes all round*] please to sit—no ceremony, next the lady, pray sir.

Lam. Well, sir, and how d'ye like my friends?

[*They all sit.*

Mir. O, madam, the most finish'd gentlemen! I was never more happy in good company in all my life; I suppose, sir, you have travell'd?

Bra. Yes, sir.

Mir. Which way, may I presume?

Bra. In a western barge, sir.

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! very pretty; facetious pretty gentleman!

Lam. Ha, ha, ha! sir, you have got the prettiest ring upon you finger there——

Mir. Ah? madam, 'tis at your service with all my heart.

[*Offering the ring.*
Lam.

Lam. By no means, sir, a family ring! [*Takes it.*]

Mir. No matter, madam. Seven hundred pounds by this light. [*Aside.*]

2 *Bra.* Pray, sir, what's o'clock?

Mir. Hum! Sir, I have left my watch at home.

2 *Brav.* I thought I saw the string of it just now—

Mir. Ods my life, sir, I beg your pardon, here it is—but it don't go. [*Putting it up.*]

Lam. O dear sir, an *English* watch! *Tompion's* I presume.

Mir. D'ye like it, madam—no ceremony——'tis at your service with all my heart and soul——*Tompion's*! Hang ye. [*Aside.*]

1 *Bra.* But, sir, above all things, I admire the fashion and make of your sword-hilt.

Mir. I'm mighty glad you like it, sir.

1 *Bra.* Will you part with it, sir?

Mir. Sir, I won't sell it.

1 *Bra.* Not sell it, sir!

Mir. No, gentlemen,———but I'll bestow it with all my heart. [*Offering it.*]

1 *Bra.* O, sir, we shall rob you.

Mir. That you do I'll be sworn. [*Aside.*] I have another at home, pray, sir,—Gentlemen you're too modest, have I any thing else that you fancy —' Sir, will you 'do me a favour?' [*To the 1st Bravo.*] I am extremely in love with that wig which you wear, will you do me the favour to change with me?

1 *Bra.* Look'e, sir, this is a family wig, and I wou'd not part with it, but if you like it——

Mir. Sir your most humble servant. [*They change wigs.*]

1 *Bra.* Madam, your most humble slave.

[*Goes up foppishly to the Lady, salutes her.*]

2 *Bra.* The fellow's very liberal; shall we murder him?

1 *Bra.* What! Let him 'scape to hang us all! And I to lose my wig; no, no! I want but a handsome pretence to quarrel with him, for you know we must act like gentlemen. 'Here, some wine'—[*Wine here.*] Sir, your good health. [*Pulls Mirabel by the nose.*]

Mir. Oh! sir, your most humble servant; a pleasant frolic enough, to drink a man's health, and pull him

by the nose : ha, ha, ha, the pleasanter pretty-humour'd gentleman.

Lam. Help the gentleman to a glass, [Mir drinks.]

1 Bra. How d'ye like the wine, sir?

Mir. Very good o' the kind, sir : But I tell ye what ; I find we're all inclin'd to be frolicsome, and I'gad, for my own part, I was never more disposed to be merry ; let's make a night on't, ha !—This wine is pretty, but I have such *Burgundy* at home.—Look'e, gentlemen, let me send for half a dozen flasks of my *Burgundy*, I defy *France* to match it ;—'Twill make us all life, all air, pray, gentlemen.

2 Bra. Eh ! Shall us have his *Burgundy* !

1 Bra. Yes, faith, we'll have all we can ; here call up the gentleman's servant—What think you, *Lamerce* ?

Lam. Yes, yes,—your servant is a foolish country boy, sir, he understands nothing but innocence.

Mir. Ay, ay, madam.—Here, *Page*, [Enter Oriana.] take this key, and go to my butler, order him to send half a dozen flasks of the red *Burgundy*, mark'd a thousand ; and be sure you make haste, I long to entertain my friends here, my very good friends.

Omnes. Ah, dear, sir !

1 Bra. Here, child, take a glass of wine—Your master and I have chang'd wigs, honey, in a frolic. Where had you this pretty boy, honest *Mustapha* ?

Ori. *Mustapha* !

Mir. Out of *Picardy*—this is the first errand he has made for me, and if he does it right, I'll encourage him.

Ori. The red *Burgundy*, sir.

Mir. The red, mark'd a-thousand, and be sure you make haste.

Ori. I shall, sir.

[Exit.]

1 Bra. Sir you were pleas'd to like my wig, have you any fancy for my coat ?—Look'e, sir, it has serv'd a great many honest gentlemen very faithfully.

Mir. Not so faithfully, for I'm afraid it has got a scurvy trick of leaving all it's masters in necessity.—The insolence of these dogs is beyond their cruelty. [Aside.]

Lam. You're melancholy, sir.

Mir. Only concern'd, madam, that I shou'd have no servant here but this little boy—he'll make some con-founded

founded blunder, I'll lay my life on't, I wou'd not be disappointed of my wine for the universe.

Lam. He'll do well enough, sir; but supper's ready, will you please to eat a bit, sir?

Mir. O, madam, I never had a better stomach in my life.

Lam. Come then,—we have nothing but a plate of soup.

Mir. Ah! the marriage-soup I cou'd dispense with now. [*Aside.*] [*Exit, handing the lady.*]

2 *Bra.* That wig won't fall to your share.

1 *Bra.* No, no, we'll settle that after supper, in the mean time the gentleman shall wear it.

2 *Bra.* Shall we dispatch him?

3 *Bra.* To be sure. I think he knows me.

1 *Bra.* Ay, ay, dead men tell no tales; I wonder at the impudence of the *English* rogues, that will hazard the meeting a man at the bar whom they have encounter'd upon the road! I ha'nt the confidence to look a man in the face after I have done him an injury, therefore we'll murder him. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE changes to Old Mirabel's house.

Enter Duretete.

Dur. My friend has forsaken me, I have abandon'd my mistress, my time lies heavy upon my hands, and my money burns in my pocket—But now I think on't, my myrmidons are upon duty to-night; I'll fairly strole down to the guard, and nod away the night with my honest lieutenant over a flask of wine, a rake-helly story, and a pipe of tobacco. [*Going off, Bis. meets him.*]

Bis. Who comes there? stand!

Dur. Hey day, now she's turn'd dragoon.

Bis. Look'e, sir, I'm told you intend to travel again.—I design to wait on you as far as *Italy*.

Dur. Then I'll travel into *Wales*.

Bis. *Wales!* What country's that?

Dur. The land of mountains, child, where you're never out of the way, 'cause there's no such thing as a high road.

Bis. Rather always in a high-road, 'cause you travel all upon hills;—but be't as it will, I'll jog along with you.

Dur. But we intend to sail to the *East-Indies*.

Bis.

Bis. East or West, 'tis all one to me ; I'm tight and light, and the fitter for sailing.

Dur. But suppose we take thro' Germany, and drink hard.

Bis. Suppose I take thro' Germany, and drink harder than you.

Dur. Suppose I go to a bawdy-house.

Bis. Suppose I shew you the way.

Dur. 'Sdeath, woman, will you go to the guard with me, and smoak a pipe ?

Bis. *Allons donc !*

Dur. The devil's in the woman ;——suppose I hang myself.

Bis. There I'll leave you.

Dur. And a happy riddance, the gallows is welcome.

Bis. Hold, hold, Sir [*Catches him by the arm going.*] one word before we part.

Dur. Let me go, madam,——or I shall think that you're a man, and perhaps may examine you.

Bis. Stir if you dare ; I have still spirits to attend me ; and can raise such a muster of fairies as shall punish you to death—Come, sir, stand there now and ogle me : [*He frowns upon her.*] Now a languishing sigh ! [*He groans.*] Now run and take my fan,——faster. [*He runs and takes it up.*] Now play with it handsomely.

Dur. Ay, ay. [*He tears it all in pieces.*]

Bis. Hold, hold, dear humourous coxcomb ; Captain, spare my fan, and I'll—Why, you rude, inhuman monster, don't you expect to pay for this ?

Dur. Yes, madam, there's twelve pence ; for that is the price on't.

Bis. Sir, it cost a guinea.

Dur. Well, madam, you shall have the sticks again. [*Throws them to her, and Exit.*]

Bis. Ha, ha, ha ! ridiculous below my concern. I must follow him however, to know if he can give me any news of Oriana. [*Exit.*]

SCENE changes to Lamorce's Lodgings.

Enter Mirabel solus.

Mir. Bloody hell-hounds, I over-heard you :——Was not I two hours ago the happy, gay, rejoicing *Mirabel* ?

bel? How did I plume my hopes in a fair coming prospect of a long scene of years? Life courted me with all the charms of vigour, youth, and fortune; and to be torn away from all my promised joys is more than death; the manner too, by villains.—O my *Oriana*, this very moment might have blest'd me in thy arms, and my poor boy! the innocent boy!—Confusion!—But hush, they come: I must dissemble still—No news of my wine, gentlemen?

Enter the four Bravoes.

1 *Bra.* No, sir, I believe your country-booby has lost himself, and we can wait no longer for't:—True, sir, you're a pleasant gentleman, but I suppose you understand our business.

Mir. Sir, I may go near to guess at your employments; you, sir, are a lawyer, I presume, you a physician, you a scrivener, and you a stock-jobber.—All cut throats, I-gad. [*Aside.*]

4 *Bra.* Sir, I am a broken officer; I was cashier'd at the head of the army for a coward: so I took up the trade of murder to retrieve the reputation of my courage.

3 *Bra.* I am a soldier too, and wou'd serve my king, but I don't like the quarrel, and I have more honour than to fight in a bad cause.

2 *Bra.* I was bred a gentleman, and have no estate, but I must have my whore and my bottle, thro' the prejudice of education.

1 *Bra.* I am a ruffian too, by the prejudice of education, I was bred a butcher. In short, sir, if your wine had come, we might have trifled a little longer.—Come, sir, which sword will you fall by? mine, sir?

2 *Bra.* Or mine?

[*draws.*]

3 *Bra.* Or mine?

[*draws.*]

4 *Bra.* Or mine?

[*draws.*]

Mir. I scorn to beg my life; but to be butcher'd thus! [*knocking*] O there's the wine:—this moment for my life or death.

Enter Oriana.

'Lost, forever lost!'—Where's the wine, child? [*faintly.*]

Ori. Coming up, sir. [*Stamps.*]

Enter

Enter Duretete with his sword drawn, and six of the grand musqueteers with their pieces presented, the Ruffians drop their swords. [Oriana goes off.]

Mir. The wine, the wine, the wine. Youth, pleasure, fortune, days and years, are now my own again.—Ah, my dear friends, did not I tell you this wine wou'd make me merry?—Dear captain, these gentlemen are the best natur'd, facetious, witty creatures, that ever you knew.

Enter Lamorce.

Lam. Is the wine come, sir?

Mir. O yes, madam, the wine is come——see there? [*Pointing to the soldiers.*] Your ladyship has got a very fine ring upon your finger.

Lam. Sir, 'tis at your service.

Mir. O ho! is it so? Thou dear seven hundred pound, thou'rt welcome home again, with all my heart—Ad's my life, madam, you have got the finest built watch there! *Tompion's*, I presume.

Lam. Sir, you may wear it.

Mir. O, madam, by no means, 'tis too much—Rob you of all!—[*Taking it from her.*] Good dear time, thou'rt a precious thing, I'm glad I have retriev'd thee: [*Putting it up.*] What, my friends neglected all this while! Gentlemen, you'll pardon my complaisance to the lady.—How now—is it civil to be so out of humour at my entertainment, and I so pleased with yours? Captain, you're surpris'd at all this! but we're in our frolics, you must know.——Some wine here.

Enter Servant with wine.

Come, Captain, this worthy gentleman's health.

[*Twinks the first Bravo by the nose; he roars.*]
But now, where——where's my dear deliverer, my boy, my charming boy!

1 *Bra.* I hope some of our crew below-stairs have dispatch'd him.

Mir. Villain, what say'st thou? Dispatch'd! I'll have ye all tortured, rack'd, torn to pieces alive, if you have touch'd my boy.—Here, page! page! page! [*Runs out.*]

Dur. Here, gentlemen, be sure you secure those fellows.

1 *Bra.* Yes, sir, we know you and your guard will be very civil to us.

Dur.

Dur. Now for you, madam;—He, he, he!—I'm so pleas'd to think that I shall be reveng'd of one woman before I die—Well, mistress *Snap Dragon*, which of these honourable gentlemen is so happy to call you wife?

Bra. Sir, she should have been mine to-night, 'cause *Sampre* here had her last night. Sir, she's very true to us all four.

Dur. Take 'em to justice. [*The guards carry off the Brav.*

Enter Old Mirabel, Dugard, Bisarre.

Old Mir. Robin, Robin, where's Bob? where's my boy?—What, is this the lady? a pretty whore, faith.---Hark'e, child, because my son was so civil as to oblige you with a coach, I'll treat with a cart, indeed I will.

Dug. Ay, madam,—and you shall have a swinging equipage, three or four thousand footmen at your heels at least.

Dur. No less becomes her quality.

Bis. Faugh! the monster!

Dur. Monster! ay, you're all a little monstrous, let me tell you.

Enter Mirabel.

Old Mir. Ah, my dear Bob, art thou safe, man?

Mir. No, no, sir, I'm ruin'd, the savor of my life is lost.

Old Mir. No, he came and brought us the news.

Mir. But where is he?—[*Enter Oriana.*] Ha! [*Runs and embraces her.*] My dear preserver, what shall I do to recompence your trust?—Father, friends, gentlemen, behold the youth that has reliev'd me from the most ignominious death, 'from the scandalous poniards of these 'bloody ruffians, where to have fall'n would have defam'd 'my memory with vile reproach.—My life, estate, my 'all, is due to such a favour'—Command me, child, before you all, before my late, so kind indulgent stars, I swear to grant whate'er you ask.

Ori. To the same stars indulgent now to me, I will appeal as to the justice of my claim; I shall demand but what was mine before—the just performance of your contract to *Oriana*.

[*Discovering herself.*

Om. Oriana!

Ori. In this disguise I resolv'd to follow you abroad, counterfeited that letter that got me into your service; and so, by this strange turn of fate, I became the instrument

ment of your preservation; 'few common servants wou'd
'have had such cunning; my love inspir'd me with the
'meaning of your message, 'cause the concern for your
'safety made me suspect your company.'

Dur. *Mirabel* you're caught.

Mir. Caught! I scorn the thought of imposition, the
'tricks and artful cunning of the sex I have despis'd, and
'broke thro' all contrivance. Caught! No, 'tis my vo-
'luntary act: this was no human stratagem, but by my
'providential stars, design'd to shew the dangers wan-
'dering youths incur by the pursuit of an unlawful love,
'to plunge me headlong in the snares of vice, and then
'to free me by the hands of virtue:' here, on my knees,
I humbly beg my fair preserver's pardon; my thanks are
needless, for myself I owe. And now for ever do pro-
test me yours.

Old Mir. 'Tall, all di dall. (*sings.*) Kiss me, daugh-
ter—no, you shall kiss me first, (*To Lamorce*) for you're
the cause on't. Well, *Bisarre*, what say you to the cap-
tain?

Bis. I like the beast well enough, but I don't under-
stand his paces so well as to venture him in a strange road.

Old Mir. But marriage is so beaten a path that you
can't go wrong.

Bis. Ay, 'tis so beaten that the way is spoil'd.

Dur. There is but one thing shou'd make me thy hus-
band—I cou'd marry thee to-day for the privilege of
beating thee to-morrow.

Bis. And then——

Old Mir. Come, come, you may agree for all this,
Mr. Dugard, are not you pleas'd with this?

Dug. So pleas'd, that if I thought it might secure your
son's affection to my sister, I wou'd double her fortune.

Mir. Fortune! has she not given me mine? my life,
estate, my all, and what is more, her virtuous self.—
Virtue, in this so advantageous light, has her own spark-
ling charms, more tempting far than glittering gold or
glory. Behold the foil (*Pointing to Lamorce*) that sets
this brightness off! (*To Oriana.*) Here view the pride
(*To Oriana.*) and scandal of the sex. (*To Lamorce.*)
There (*To Lam.*) the false meteor, whose deluding light
leads mankind to destruction. Here (*To Oriana*) the
bright

bright shining star that guides to a security of happiness, a garden and a single she (*To Oriana*) was our first father's bliss; the tempter (*To Lam.*) and to wander, was his curse.

What liberty can be so tempting there, (*To Lam.*
As a soft, virtuous, am'rous bondage here? (*To Ori.*
 [Exeunt omnes.]

S O N G:

SINCE, Cœlia, 'tis not in our power
 To tell how long our lives may last,
 Begin to love this very hour,
 You've lost too much in what is past.

For since the power we all obey,
Has in your breast my heart confin'd,
Let me my body to it lay,
In vain you'd part what nature join'd.

E P I L O G U E.

*FROM Fletcher's great original to day
 We took the hint of this our modern play;
 Our author, from his lines, has strove to paint
 A witty, wild, inconstant, free gallant:
 With a gay soul, with sense, and will to rove,
 With language, and with softness fram'd to move,
 With little truth, but with a world of love.
 Such forms on maids in morning slumbers wait,
 When fancy first instructs their hearts to beat,
 When first they wish, and sigh for what they know not yet.
 Frown not, ye fair, to think your lovers may
 Reach your cold hearts by some unguarded way;
 Let Villeroy's misfortune make you wise,
 There's danger still in darkness and surprise;
 Tho' from his rampart he defy'd the foe,
 Prince Eugene found an aqueduct below.
 With easy freedom and a gay address,
 A pressing lover seldom wants success:
 Whilst the respectful, like the Greek, sits down,
 And wastes a ten years siege before the town.
 For her own sake, let no forsaken maid,
 Our wanderer, for want of love, upbraid;
 Since 'tis a secret, none shou'd e'er confess,
 That they have lost the happy pow'r to please.
 If you suspect the rogue inclin'd to break,
 Break first, and swear you've turn'd him off a week
 As princes, when they resty statesmen doubt,
 Before they can surrender, turn 'em out.
 Whate'er you think, grave uses may be made,
 And much even for inconstancy be said.
 Let the good man for marriage-rites design'd,
 With studious care, and diligence of mind,
 Turn over every page of womankind;
 Mark every sense, and how the readings vary,
 And, when he knows the worst on't,—let him marry.*

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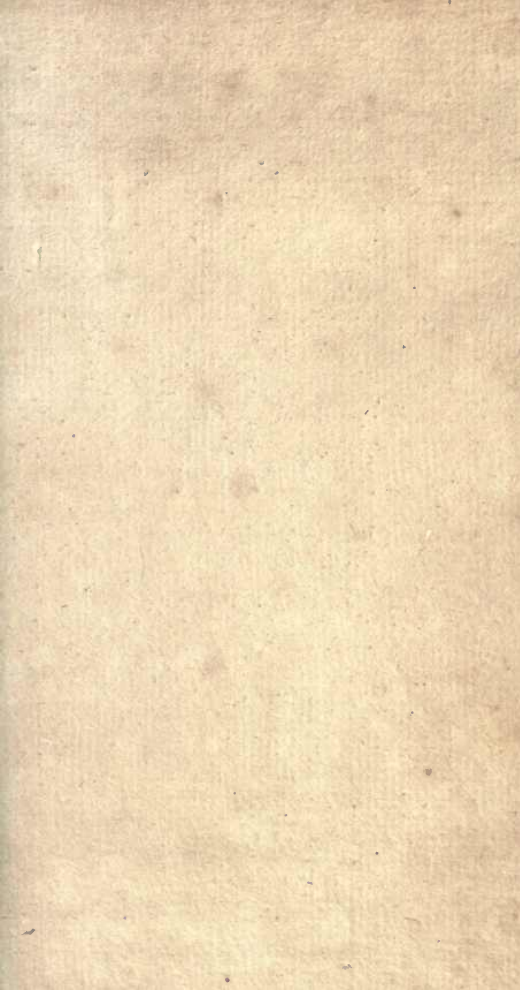
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CONSTANT COUPLE.



Dodd del.

Goldar sculp.

M^{RS} BARRY as SIR HARRY WILDAIR.

— I'death I'm afraid I've mistaken the House

Published May 19. 1777. by J Lowndes & partners. Act II, Sc. 2.

THE
CONSTANT COUPLE;

OR,
A TRIP TO THE JUBILEE.

A
C O M E D Y.

By MR. FARQUHAR.

Marked with the Variations in the

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A T T H E

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Sive favore tuli, sive hanc ego carmine famam;

Jure tibi grates, candide lector, ago.

Ovid. Trist. lib. iv. Eleg. 10.



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M. DCC. LXXVII.

DOES not think it necessary to thank you for your
kindness, and for the trouble you have taken

Our friend, who is now in the country, has been

With the greatest satisfaction, and with the

For all that, I am very much obliged to you

With the greatest satisfaction, and with the

For all that, I am very much obliged to you

With the greatest satisfaction, and with the

For all that, I am very much obliged to you

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* * The Reader is desired to observe, that the passages omitted in the
Representation at the Theatres are here preserved, and marked with
inverted Commas ; as in Line 17, &c. Page 18.

P R O L O G U E.

POETS will think nothing so checks their Fury
 As Wits, Cits, Beaux, and Women for their Jury.
 Our Spark's half dead to think what Medley's come,
 With blended Judgments to pronounce his Doom.
 'Tis all false Fear; for in a mingled Pit,
 Why, what your grave Don thinks but dully writ,
 His Neighbour i'th' great Wig may take for Wit.
 Some authors court the few, the wise if any;
 Our youth's content, if he can reach the many,
 Who go with much like ends to church and play,
 Not to observe what priests or poets say,
 No! no! your thoughts, like theirs, lie quite another way.
 The ladies safe may smile, for here's no slander,
 No smut, no lew'd-tong'd beau, nor double entendre.
 'Tis true, he has a spark just come from France,
 But then so far from Beau—why, he talks sense!
 Like coin oft carry'd out, but—seldom brought from thence.
 There's yet a gang to whom our spark submits,
 Your elbow shaking fool, that lives by's wits,
 That's only witty tho', just as he lives, by fits.
 Who, Lion-like, through bailiffs, scours away,
 Hunts, in the face, a dinner all the day,
 At night with empty bowels grumbles o'er the play.
 And now the modish 'Prentice he implores,
 Who, with his master's cash, stol'n out of doors,
 Employs it on a brace of—honourable whores:
 While their good bulky mother pleas'd, sits by,
 Bawd regent of the bubble gallery.
 Next to our mounted friends, we humbly move,
 Who all your side-box tricks are much above,
 And never fail to pay us with your love.
 Ah friends! poor Dorset garden house is gone;
 Our merry meetings there are all undone:
 Quite lost to us, sure for some strange misdeeds,
 That strong dog Sampson's pull'd it o'er our heads,
 Snaps rope like thread; but when his fortune's told him,
 He'll bear perhaps of rope will one day hold him:
 At least, I hope, that our good-natur'd town
 Will find a way to pull his prices down.

Well, that's all! now, gentlemen, for the play,
 On second thoughts, I've but two words to say;
 Such as it is for your delight design'd,
 Hear it, read, try, judge, and speak as you find.

Dramatis Personæ, 1777.

M E N.

Sir Harry Wildair	—	—	—
Beau Clincher	—	—	—
Colonel Standard	—	—	—
Alderman Smuggler	—	—	—
Clincher junior	—	—	—
Vizard	—	—	—
Dicky	—	—	—
Tom Errand	—	—	—

AT DRURY-LANE.

Mr. DODD.
Mr. KING.
Mr. BENSLEY.
Mr. PARSONS.
Mr. WESTON.
Mr. PACKER.
Mr. WALDRON.
Mr. GRIFFITH.

W O M E N.

Angelica	—	—	—
Lady Darling	—	—	—
Parly	—	—	—
Lady Lurewell	—	—	—

Miss HOPKINS.
Mrs. CROSS.
Mrs. LOVE.
Mrs. BADDELEY.

Constable, Mob, Porter's Wife, Servants, &c.

, S C E N E, L O N D O N.

T H E

CONSTANT COUPLE.

A C T I.

SCENE, *The Park.*

Enter Vizard with a Letter, a Servant following.

Viz. *ANGELICA* send it back unopen'd! say you?
Serv. As you see, sir.

Viz. The pride of these virtuous women is more insufferable than the immodesty of prostitutes—after all my encouragement to slight me thus!

Serv. She said, sir, that imagining your morals sincere, she gave you access to her conversation; but that your late behaviour in her company has convinc'd her, that your love and religion are both hypocrisy, and that she believes your letter like yourself, fair on the outside, foul within; so sent it back unopen'd.

Viz. May obstinacy guard her beauty till wrinkles bury it; then may desire prevail to make her curse that untimely pride her disappointed age repents—I'll be reveng'd the very first opportunity——saw you the old lady *Darling*, her mother?

Serv. Yes, sir, and she was pleas'd to say much in your commendation.

Viz. That's my cue——an esteem grafted in old age is hardly rooted out; years stiffen their opinions with their bodies, and old zeal is only to be cozen'd by young hypocrisy. ———

[*Aside.*
 Run to the lady *Lurewell*'s, and know of her maid, whether

ther her ladyship will be at home this evening. Her beauty is sufficient cure for *Angelica's* scorn.

[*Exit Servant.* *Vizard* pulls out a Book, reads, and walks about.

Enter Smuggler.

Smug. Ay, there's a pattern for the young men o'th' times—at his meditation so early, some book of pious ejaculations, I'm sure.

Viz. This *Hobbes* is an excellent fellow? [*Aside.*] O Uncle *Smuggler*! to find you at this end o'th' town is a miracle.

Smug. I have seen a miracle this morning indeed, cousin *Vizard*.

Viz. What is it, pray, sir?

Smug. A man at his devotion so near the court—I'm very glad, boy, that you keep your sanctity untainted in this infectious place; the very air of this Park is heathenish, and every man's breath I meet scents of atheism.

Viz. Surely, sir, some great concern must bring you to this un sanctify'd end of the town.

Smug. A very un sanctify'd concern truly, cousin.

Viz. What is it?

Smug. A law-suit, boy——shall I tell you?——My ship the *Swan* is newly arriv'd from *St. Sebastian*, laden with *Portugal* wines: now the impudent rogue of a tide-waiter has the face to affirm it is *French* wines in *Spanish* casks, and has indicted me upon the statute——O conscience! conscience! these tide-waiters and surteyors plague us more with their *French* wines, than the war did with *French* privateers——Ay, there's another plague of the nation——

Enter Colonel Standard,

A red coat and feather.

Viz. Col. *Standard*, I'm your humble servant.

Stand. May be not, Sir.

Viz. Why so?

Stand. Because——I'm disbanded.

Viz. How! Broke?

Stand. This very Morning, in *Hide-Park*, my brave regiment, a thousand men that look'd like lions yesterday,

terday, were scatter'd, and look'd as poor and simple as the herd of deer that graz'd beside 'em.

Smug. Tal, al, deral [*Singing.*] I'll have a bonfire this night as high as the monument.

Stand. A bonfire! thou dry, wither'd, ill-nature; had not those brave fellows swords defended you, your house had been a bonfire e'er this about your ears.— Did we not venture our lives, fir?

Smug. And did we not pay for your lives, fir?— Venture your lives! I'm sure we ventur'd our money, and that's life and soul to me.—Sir, we'll maintain you no longer.

Stand. Then your wives shall, old *Actæon*. There are five and thirty strapping officers gone this morning to live upon free quarter in the city.

Smug. O Lord! O Lord! I shall have a son within these nine months born with a leading staff in his hand.

—Sir, you are. —

Stand. What, fir?

Smug. Sir, I say that you are. —

Stand. What, fir?

Smug. Disbanded, fir, that's all — I see my lawyer yonder.

[*Exit.*

Viz. Sir, I am very sorry for your misfortune.

Stand. Why so? I don't come to borrow money of you; if you're my Friend, meet me this evening at the *Rummer*; I'll pay my foy, drink a health to my king, prosperity to my country, and away for *Hungary* to-morrow morning.

Viz. What! you won't leave us?

Stand. What! A soldier stay here, to look like an old pair of colours in *Westminster-Hall*, ragged and rusty! no, no — I met yesterday a broken lieutenant, he was ashamed to own that he wanted a dinner, but begg'd eighteen-pence of me to buy a new scabbard for his sword.

Viz. Oh, but you have good friends, colonel!

Stand. Oh, very good friends! my father's a Lord, and my elder brother a beau; mighty-good friends indeed!

Viz. But your country may perhaps want your sword again.

Stand. Nay, for that matter, let but a single drum beat up for volunteers between *Ludgate* and *Charing-Cross*, and I shall undoubtedly hear it at the walls of *Buda*.

Viz. Come, come, colonel, there are ways of making your fortune at home — make your addresses to the fair, you're a man of honour and courage.

Stand. Ay, my courage is like to do me wondrous service with the fair: this pretty cross cut over my eye will attract a duchess — I warrant 'twill be a mighty grace to my ogling — had I us'd the stratagem of a certain brother colonel of mine, I might succeed.

Viz. What was it, pray?

Stand. Why, to save his pretty face for the women; he always turn'd his back upon the enemy. — he was a man of honour for the ladies.

Viz. Come, come, the loves of *Mars* and *Venus* will never fail; you must get a mistress.

Stand. Prithee, no more on't — you have awaken'd a thought, from which, and the kingdom, I wou'd have stol'n away at once. — To be plain, I have a mistress.

Viz. And she's cruel?

Stand. No.

Viz. Her parents prevent your happiness?

Stand. Nor that.

Viz. Then she has no fortune?

Stand. A large one: beauty to tempt all mankind; and virtue to beat off their assaults. O *Vizard*! such a creature!

Enter Sir Harry Wildair, crosses the Stage singing, with Footmen after him.

Hey-day! who the devil have we here?

Viz. The joy of the play-house, and life of the Park; Sir *Harry Wildair*, newly come from *Paris*.

Stand. Sir *Harry Wildair*! did not he make a campaign in *Flanders* some three or four years ago?

Viz. The same.

Stand. Why, he behaved himself very bravely.

Viz. Why not? Do'st think bravery and gaiety are inconsistent? He's a gentleman of most happy circumstances,

stances, born to a plentiful estate; has had a genteel and easy education, free from the rigidness of teachers, and pedantry of schools. His florid constitution being never ruffled by misfortune, nor stinted in its pleasures, has render'd him entertaining to others, and easy to himself.—Turning all passion into gaiety of humour, by which he chuses rather to rejoice with his friends, than be hated by any; as you shall see.

Re-enter Wildair.

Wild. Ha, *Vizard!*

Viz. Sir Harry!

Wild. Who thought to find you out of the *Rubrick* so long? I thought thy hypocrisy had been wedded to a pulpit-cushion long ago. — Sir, if I mistake not your face, your name is *Standard*.

Stand. Sir Harry, I'm your humble servant.

Wild. Come, gentlemen, the news, the news o'th' town, for I'm just arriv'd.

Viz. Why, in the city-end o'th' town we're playing the knave, to get estates.

Stand. And in the court-end playing the fool, in spending 'em.

Wild. Just so in *Paris*. I'm glad we're grown so modish!

Viz. We are so reform'd, that gallantry is taken for vice.

Stand. And hypocrisy for religion.

Wild. *A la mode de Paris* again,

'*Viz.* Not one whore between *Ludgate* and *Aldgate*.

'*Stand.* But ten times more cuckolds than ever.'—

Viz. Nothing like an oath in the city.

Stand. That's a mistake; for my major swore a hundred and fifty last night to a merchant's wife in her bed-chamber.

Wild. Pshaw, this is trifling; tell me news, gentlemen. What lord has lately broke his fortune at the *Groom-Porter's*? Or his heart at *New-Market*, for the loss of a race? What wife has been lately suing in *Doctors-Commons* for alimony? Or, what daughter run away with her father's *valet*? what beau gave the noblest ball at the *Bath*, or had the finest coach in the ring? I want news, gentlemen.

Stand. Faith, sir, these are no news at all,

Viz. But pray, Sir *Harry*, tell us some news of your travels.

Wild. With all my heart.—You must know then, I went over to *Amsterdam* in a *Dutch* ship: I there had a *Dutch* whore for five stivers. I went from thence to *Landen*, where I was heartily drub'd in the battle with the but-end of a *Swiss* musket. I thence went to *Paris*, where I had half a dozen intrigues, bought half a dozen new suits, fought a couple of duels, and here I am again *in statu quo*.

Viz. But we heard that you design'd to make the tour of *Italy*; what brought you back so soon?

Wild. That which brought you into the world, and may perhaps carry you out of it; a woman.

Stand. What! quit the pleasures of travel for a woman!

Wild. Ay, colonel, for such a woman! I had rather see her *Ruelle* than the palace of *Lewis le Grand*: there's more glory in her smile, than in the *Jubilee* at *Rome*; and I wou'd rather kiss her hand, than the Pope's toe.

Viz. You, colonel, have been very lavish in the beauty and virtue of your mistress; and Sir *Harry* here has been no less eloquent in the praise of his. Now will I lay you both ten guineas a-piece, that neither of them is so pretty, so witty, or so virtuous, as mine.

Stand. 'Tis done.

Wild. I'll double the stakes—But, gentlemen, now I think on't, how shall we be resolv'd? For I know not where my mistress may be found; she left *Paris* about a month before me, and I had an account——

Stand. How, sir! left *Paris* about a month before you?

Wild. Yes, sir, and I had an account that she lodg'd somewhere in *St. James's*.

Viz. How! somewhere in *St. James's*, say you?

Wild. Ay, sir, but I know not where, and perhaps mayn't find her this fortnight.

Stand. Her name, pray, Sir *Harry*.

Viz. Ay, ay, her name; perhaps we know her.

Wild. Her name! ay,——she has the softest, whitest hand that e'er was made of flesh and blood; her lips so balmy sweet——

Stand.

Stand. But her name, sir.

Wild. Then her neck and breast;—her breasts do
so heave, so heave. [Singing.]

Viz. But her name, Sir; her quality.

Wild. Then her shape, colonel!

Stand. But her name I want, sir.

Wild. Then her eyes, *Vizard*!

Stand. Pshaw, Sir *Harry*, her name, or nothing.

Wild. Then if you must have it, she's call'd the lady
—— But then her foot, gentlemen; she dances to a
miracle. *Vizard*, you have certainly lost your wager.

Viz. Why, you have certainly lost your senses; we
shall never discover the picture, unless you subscribe
the name.

Wild. Then her name is *Lurewell*.

Stand. 'Sdeath, my mistress. [Aside.]

Viz. My mistress, by *Jupiter*. [Aside.]

Wild. Do you know her, gentlemen?

Stand. I have seen her, sir.

Wild. Can't tell where she lodges? Tell me, dear
colonel.

Stand. Your humble servant, sir. [Exit *Stand.*]

Wild. Nay, hold, colonel; I'll follow you, and
will know. [Runs out.]

Viz. The lady *Lurewell*, his mistress! he loves her:
but she loves me.—But he's a baronet, and I plain *Vi-*
zard; he has a coach and six, and I walk on foot;
I was bred in *London*, and he in *Paris*.——That very
circumstance has murder'd me——then some stratagem
must be laid to divert his pretensions.

Re-enter Wildair.

Wild. Prithee, *Dick*, what makes the colonel so out
of humour?

Viz. Because he's out of pay, I suppose.

Wild. 'Slife, that's true; I was beginning to mistrust
some rivalry in the case.

Viz. And suppose there were, you know the colonel
can fight, Sir *Harry*.

Wild. Fight! pshaw! but he can't dance, ha! he
contend for a woman, *Vizard*! 'slife, man, if ladies
were to be gain'd by sword and pistol only, what the
devil should all we beaux do?

Viz. I'll try him farther. [*Aside.*] But wou'd not you, Sir Harry, fight for this woman you so much admire?

Wild. Fight! let me consider. I love her——that's true;—but then I love honest Sir Harry Wildair better. The lady *Lurewell* is divinely charming——right——but then a thrust i'th' guts, or a *Middlesex* jury, is as ugly as the devil.

Viz. Ay, Sir Harry, 'twere a dangerous cast for a beau baronet to be tried by a parcel of greasy, grumbling, bartering boobies, who wou'd hang you, purely because you're a gentleman.

Wild. Ay, but, on t'other hand, I have money enough to bribe the rogues with: so upon mature deliberation, I would fight for her.——But no more of her. Prithee, *Vizard*, can't you recommend a friend to a pretty mistress by the by, till I can find my own? You have store I'm sure; you cunning poaching dogs make surer game, than we that hunt open and fair. Prithee now, good *Vizard*.

Viz. Let me consider a little.——Now love and revenge inspire my politics. [*Aside.*]

[*Pauses whilst Sir Harry walks singing.*]
Wild. Pshaw! thou'rt as long studying for a new mistress, as a drawer is piercing a new pipe.

Viz. I design a new pipe for you, and wholesome wine; you'll therefore bear a little expectation.

Wild. Ha! say'st thou, dear *Vizard*?

Viz. A girl of Sixteen, Sir Harry.

Wild. Now sixteen thousand blessings light on thee.

Viz. Pretty and witty.

Wild. Ay, ay, but her name, *Vizard*.

Viz. Her name! yes,——she has the softest whitest Hand that e'er was made of flesh and blood; her lips so balmy sweet——

Wild. Well, well, but where shall I find her, man?

Viz. Find her!——but then her foot, Sir Harry; she dances to a miracle.

Wild. Prithee don't distract me.

Viz. Well then, you must know, that this lady is the greatest beauty in town; her name's *Angelica*: she that passes for her mother is a private bawd, and call'd the

the Lady *Darling*; she goes for a Baronet's Lady, (no disparagement to your honour, Sir *Harry*) I assure you.

Wild. Pshaw, hang my honour; but what street, what house?

Viz. Not so fast, Sir *Harry*; you must have my passport for your admittance, and you'll find my recommendation in a line or two will procure you very civil entertainment; I suppose 20 or 30 pieces handsomely plac'd, will gain the point: I'll ensure her sound.

Wild. Thou dearest friend to a man in necessity.— Here, firrah, order my coach about to St. *James's*; I'll walk across the Park. [To his Servant.

Enter Clincher Senior.

Clinch. Here, firrah, order my coach about to St. *James's*, I'll walk across the Park too——

Mr. Vizard, your most devoted——

Sir [to *Wildair*] I admire the mode of your shoulder-knot;

Methinks it hangs very emphatically and carries an air of travel in it:

Your sword-knot too is most ornamentally modish, and bears a foreign mien.

Gentlemen, my brother is just arrived in town;

So that being upon the wing to kiss his hands,

I hope you'll pardon this abrupt departure of,

Gentlemen, your most devoted, and most faithful humble servant. [Exit.

Wild. Prithce dost know him?

Viz. Know him! why it is *Clincher*, who was apprentice to my uncle *Smuggler*, the merchant in the city.

Wild. What makes him so gay?

Viz. Why he's in mourning.

Wild. In mourning!

Viz. Yes, for his father. The kind old man in *Hertfordshire* t'other day broke his neck a fox-hunting; The son upon the news has broke his indentures; Whip'd from behind the counter into the side-box, ' Forswears merchandize, where he must live by cheating, ' And usurps gentility, where he must die by raking, ' He keeps his coach and liveries, brace of geldings, ' Leash of mistresses,'

And now talks of nothing but vines, Intrigues, plays, fashions, and going to the Jubilee.

Wild,

Wild. Ha, ha, ha! how many pounds of pulvil must the fellow use in sweetning himself from the smell of hops and tobacco?

Faugh—I'my conscience methought,
Like *Olivia's* lover, he stunk of *Thames-Street*.

But now for *Angelica*, that's her name:

We'll to the Prince's chocolate-house,

Where you shall write my pass-port. *Allons.* [Exeunt.

WORK SCENE, *Lady Lurewell's Lodgings.*

Lurewell and her Maid Parly.

Lure. *Parly*, my pocket-book—let me see—*Madrid, Venice, Paris, London!*—Ay, *London!* they may talk what they will of the hot countries, but I find love most fruitful under this climate—in a month's space have I gain'd—let me see, *Imprimis*, Colonel *Standard*:

Par. And how will your ladyship manage him?

Lure. As all foldiers should be manag'd; he shall serve me till I gain my ends, then I'll disband him.

Par. But he loves you, madam.

Lure. Therefore I scorn him;

I hate all that don't love me, and slight all that do:

Would his whole deluding sex admir'd me,

Thus wou'd I slight them all.

My virgin and unwary innocence

Was wrong'd by faithless man;

But now glance eyes, plot brain, dissemble face,

Lie tongue, and be a second *Eve* to tempt, seduce, and

Damn the treacherous kind.——

Let me survey my captives.——

The colonel leads the van; next Mr. *Vizard*,

He courts me out of the Practice of Piety,

Therefore is a hypocrite;

Then *Clincher*, he adores me with orangerée,

And is consequently a fool;

Then my old merchant, Alderman *Smuggler*,

He's a compound of both;—out of which medley of lovers, if I don't make good diversion—what d'ye think, *Parly*?

Par. I think, madam, I'm like to be very virtuous in your service, if you teach me all those tricks that you use to your lovers.

Lure.

Lure. You're a fool, child! observe this, that tho' a woman swear, forswear, lie, dissemble, back-bite, be proud, vain, malicious, any thing, if she secures the main chance, she's still virtuous; that's a maxim.

Par. I can't be persuaded tho', madam, but that you really lov'd Sir *Harry Wildair* in *Paris*.

Lure. Of all the lovers I ever had, he was my greatest plague, for I cou'd never make him uneasy: I left him involv'd in a duel upon my account: I long to know whether the fop be kill'd or not.

Enter Standard.

O Lord! no sooner talk of killing, but the soldier is conjur'd up. You're upon hard duty, colonel, to serve your king, your country, and a mistress too.

Stand. The latter, I must confess, is the hardest; for in war, madam, we can be reliev'd in our duty; but in love, who wou'd take our post, is our enemy; emulation in glory is transporting, but rivals here intolerable.

Lure. Those that bear away the prize in the field, should boast the same success in the bed-chamber; and I think, considering the weakness of our sex, we shou'd make those our companions who can be our champions.

Stand. I once, madam, hop'd the honour of defending you from all injuries, thro' a title to your lovely person, but now my love must attend my fortune. My commission, madam, was my pass-port to the fair; adding a nobleness to my passion, it stamp'd a value in my love; 'twas once the life of honour, but now its winding-sheet, and with it must my love be buried.

Par. What! disbanded, colonel?

Stand. Yes, Mrs. *Parly*.

Par. Faugh, the nauseous fellow! he stinks of poverty already.

[*Aside.*]

Lure. His misfortune troubles me, 'cause it may prevent my designs.

[*Aside.*]

Stand. I'll chuse, madam, rather to destroy my passion by absence abroad, than have it starv'd at home.

Lure. I'm sorry, sir, you have so mean an opinion of my affection, as to imagine it founded upon your fortune. And to convince you of your mistake, here I

vow

16 THE CONSTANT COUPLE.

vow by all that's sacred, I own the same affection now as before. Let it suffice, my fortune is considerable.

Stand. No, madam no; I'll never be a charge to her I love! the man that sells himself for gold, is the worst of prostitutes.

Lure. Now were he any other creature but a man, I cou'd love him. [*Aside.*]

Stand. This only last request I make, that no title recommend a fool, no office introduce a knave, nor coat a coward, to my place in your affections; so farewell my country, and adieu my love. [*Exit.*]

Lure. Now the devil take thee for being so honourable: here, *Parly*, call him back, I shall lose half my diversion else. Now for a trial of skill. [*Re-enter Colonel.*]
Sir, I hope you'll pardon my curiosity:
When do you take your journey?

Stand. To-morrow morning, early, madam.

Lure. So suddenly! which way are you design'd to travel?

Stand. That I can't yet resolve on.

Lure. Pray, sir, tell me; pray, sir; I intreat you; why are you so obstinate!

Stand. Why are you so curious, madam?

Lure. Because——

Stand. What!

Lure. Because, I, I,——

Stand. Because! what, madam?—Pray tell me.

Lure. Because I design to follow you. [*Crying.*]

Stand. Follow me! by all that's great, I ne'er was proud before.

‘But such love from such a creature

‘Might swell the vanity of the proudest prince.’

Follow me! by Heavens thou shalt not.

What! expose thee to the hazards of a camp——

Rather I'll stay, and here

Bear the contempt of fools, ‘and worst of fortune.’

Lure. You need not, shall not; my estate for both is sufficient.

Stand. Thy estate! no, I'll turn a knave, and purchase one myself; I'll cringe to the proud man I undermine, and fawn on him that I wou'd bite to death; I'll tip my tongue with flattery, and smooth my face with smiles;

smiles; I'll turn pimp, informer, office-broker, nay coward, to be great; and sacrifice it all to thee, my generous fair.

Lure. And I'll dissemble, lie, swear, jilt, any thing, but I'll reward thy love, and recompense thy noble passion.

Stand. Sir *Harry*, ha, ha, ha! poor Sir *Harry*, ha, ha, ha! rather kiss her hand, than the Pope's toe, ha, ha, ha!

Lure. What Sir *Harry*, Colonel! What Sir *Harry*!

Stand. Sir *Harry Wildair*, madam.

Lure. What! is he come over?

Stand. Ay, and he told me—but I don't believe a syllable on't.

Lure. What did he tell you?

Stand. Only called you his mistress, and pretending to be extravagant in your commendation, would vainly insinuate the praise of his own judgment and good fortune in a choice.——

Lure. How easily is the vanity of fops tickled by our sex!

Stand. Why, your sex is the vanity of fops.

Lure. On my conscience, I believe so. This gentleman, because he danc'd well, I pitch'd on for a partner at a ball in *Paris*, and ever since he has so persecuted me with letters, songs, dances, serenading, flattery, foppery, and noise, that I was forc'd to fly the kingdom—and I warrant you he made you jealous.

Stand. Faith, madam, I was a little uneasy.

Lure. You shall have a plentiful revenge; I'll send him back all his foolish letters, songs and verses, and you yourself shall carry 'em; 'twill afford you opportunity of triumphing, and free me from his farther importunance; for of all men he's my aversion. I'll run and fetch them instantly.

Stand. Dear madam, a rare project! How shall I bait him like *Ætæon* with his own dogs!—— Well, Mrs. *Parly*, it is ordered by act of parliament, that you receive no more pieces, Mrs. *Parly*.——

Par. 'Tis provided by the same act, that you send no more messages by me, good Colonel; you must not pretend to send any more letters, unless you can pay the postage.

Stand.

Stand. Come, come, don't be mercenary; take example by your lady, be honourable.

Par. A-lack-a-day, fir, it shews as ridiculous and haughty for us to imitate our betters in their honour, as in their finery; leave honour to nobility that can support it: We poor folks, colonel, have no pretence to't; and truly, I think, fir, that your honour should be cashier'd with your leading-staff.

Stand. 'Tis one of the greatest curses of poverty, to be the jest of chambermaids!

Enter Lurewell.

Lure. Here's the packet, colonel; the whole magazine of love's artillery. *[Gives him the packet.]*

Stand. Which since I have gain'd, I will turn upon the enemy. Madam, I'll bring you the news of my victory this evening. Poor Sir Harry, ha, ha, ha! *[Exit.]*

Lure. To the right about as you were; march colonel! ha, ha, ha!

Vain man, who boasts of study'd parts and wiles!
Nature in us, your deepest arts beguiles,
Stamping deep cunning in our frowns and smiles,
You toil for art, your intellects you trace;
Woman, without a thought, bears policy in her face.

ACT II. SCENE, Clincher Junior's Lodgings.

Enter Clincher opening a Letter, Servant following.

Dear Brother,

Clin.— I Will see you presently; I have sent this lad to reads. *I wait on you, he can instruct you in the fashions of the town; I am your affectionate brother,*

Clincher.

Very well, and what's your name, fir?

Dick. My name is Dicky, fir?

Clin. Dicky!

Dick. Ay, Dicky, fir.

Clin. Very well, a pretty name! And what can you do, Mr. Dicky?

Dick.

Dick. Why, sir, I can powder a wig, and pick up a whore.

Clin. O Lord! O Lord! A whore! Why are there many whores in this town?

Dick. Ha, ha, ha! many whores? There's a question indeed; why, sir, there are above five hundred surgeons in town.—Hark'e, sir, do you see that woman there in the velvet scarf, and red knots?

Clin. Ay, sir, what then?

Dick. Why she shall be at your service in three minutes, as I'm a pimp.

Clin. O *Jupiter Ammon*! Why she's a gentlewoman.

Dick. A gentlewoman! so are all the whores in town, sir.

Enter Clincher senior.

Clin. sen. Brother, you're welcome to *London*!

Clin. jun. I thought, brother, you ow'd so much to the memory of my father, as to wear mourning for his death.

Clin. sen. Why so I do, fool; I wear this because I have the estate, and you wear that, because you have not the estate. You have cause to mourn indeed, brother. Well, brother, I'm glad to see you, fare you well. [*Going.*]

Clin. jun. Stay, stay, brother; where are you going?

Clin. sen. How natural 'tis for a country booby to ask impertinent questions. Hark'e, sir, is not my father dead?

Clin. jun. Ay, ay, to my sorrow.

Clin. sen. No matter for that, he's dead; and am not I a young powder'd extravagant *English* heir?

Clin. jun. Very right, sir.

Clin. sen. Why then, sir, you may be sure that I am going to the *Jubilee*, sir.

Clin. jun. *Jubilee*! What's that?

Clin. sen. *Jubilee*! Why the *Jubilee* is——faith, I don't know what it is.

Dick. Why, the *Jubilee* is the same thing with our Lord Mayor's day in the city; there will be *pageants*, and *squibs*, and *raree shows*, and all that, sir.

Clin. jun. And must you go so soon, brother?

Clin.

Clin. sen. Yes, sir, for I must stay a month in *Amsterdam*, to study poetry.

Clin. jun. Then I suppose, brother, you travel through *Muscovy* to learn fashions, don't you, brother?

Clin. sen. Brother! Prithee, *Robin*, don't call me brother; sir will do every jot as well.

Clin. jun. O *Jupiter Ammon*! why so?

Clin. sen. Because people will imagine that you have a spite at me. — But have you seen your cousin *Angelica* yet, and her mother the *Lady Darling*?

Clin. jun. No, my dancing-master has not been with me yet. How shall I salute them, brother?

Clin. sen. Pshaw, that's easy; 'tis only two scrapes, a kiss, and your humble servant. I'll tell you more when I come from the *Jubilee*. Come along. [Exeunt.]

SCENE, *Lady Darling's House.*

Enter Wildair with a Letter.

Wild. *I* Like light and heat incorporate we lay,
We bless'd the night and curs'd the coming day.

Well, if this paper-kite flies sure, I'm secure of my game—humph! The prettiest *bordel* I have seen, a very stately genteel one. [Footmen cross the stage.]

Hey day! equipage too! Now for a bawd by the *curse*, and a whore with a *coat of arms*.—'Sdeath. I'm afraid I've mistaken the house.

Enter Lady Darling.

No, this must be the bawd by her gravity.

Darl. Your business, pray, sir?

Wild. Pleasure, madam.

Darl. Then, sir, you have no business here.

Wild. This letter, madam, will inform you farther;
Mr. Vizard sent it, with his humble service to your ladyship.

Darl. How does my cousin, sir?

Wild. Ay, her cousin too; that's right procurefs again.

Madam,

Madam,

Darl. *E* *Arnest inclination to serve*———*Sir Harry*———
reads. *Madam*———*Court my Cousin*———*Gentleman*
Fortune———

Your Ladyship's most humble Servant,

V I Z A R D.

Sir, your fortune and quality are sufficient to recommend you any where; but what goes farther with me, is the recommendation of so sober and pious a young gentleman as my cousin *Vizard*.

Wild. A right sanctify'd bawd o'my word.

Darl. Sir *Harry*, your conversation with Mr. *Vizard* argues you a gentleman, free from the loose and vicious carriage of the town; I'll therefore call my daughter.

[*Exit.*

Wild. Now go thy way for an illustrious bawd of *Babylon*——She dresses up a sin so religiously, that the devil wou'd hardly know it of his making.

Re-enter Darling with Angelica.

Darl. Pray, daughter, use him civilly; such matches, won't offer every day.

[*Exit. Lady Darl.*]

Wild. O all ye powers of love! An angel! 'Sdeath, what money have I got in my pocket! I can't offer her less than twenty guineas——and by *Jupiter* she's worth a hundred.

Angel. 'Tis he! The very same! And his person as agreeable as his character of good humour——pray heav'n his silence proceed from respect.

Wild. How innocent she looks! How would that modesty adorn virtue, when it makes even vice look so charming!——By heaven there's such a commanding innocence in her looks, that I dare not ask the question.

Angel. Now all the charms of real love and feign'd indifference assist me to engage his heart, for mine is lost already.

Wild. Madam—I, I——zooks, I cannot speak to her—but she's a whore, and I will——madam, in short, I, I——O hypocrisy, hypocrisy, what a charming sin art thou?

Angel. He is caught; now to secure my conquest—I thought, Sir, you had business to communicate.

Wild.

Wild. Business to communicate! How nicely she words it! Yes, madam, I have a little business to communicate. Don't you love singing birds, madam?

Angel. That's an odd question for a lover——Yes, sir.

Wild. Why then, madam, here is a nest of the prettiest goldfinches that ever chirp'd in a cage; twenty young ones, I assure you, madam.

Angel. Twenty young ones! What then, sir?

Wild. Why then, madam, there are—twenty young ones——'Slife, I think twenty is pretty fair.

Angel. He's mad, sure——Sir *Harry*, when you have learn'd more wit and manners, you shall be welcome here again.

Wild. Wit and manners! Egad, now I conceive there is a great deal of wit and manners in twenty guineas—I'm sure 'tis all the wit and manners I have about me at present. What shall I do?

Enter Clincher junior and Dicky.

What the the devil's here? Another cousin, I warrant ye! Hark'e, sir, can you lend me ten or a dozen guineas instantly? I'll pay you fifteen for them in three hours, upon my honour.

Clin. jun. These *London* sparks are plaguy impudent! This fellow, by his wig and assurance, can be no less than a courtier.

Dick. He's rather a courtier by his borrowing.

Clin. jun. Faith, sir, I ha'n't above five guineas about me.

Wild. What business have you here then, sir? For to my knowledge twenty won't be sufficient.

Clinch. jun. Sufficient! For what, sir?

Wild. What, sir! Why, for that, sir; what the devil should it be, sir? I know your business, notwithstanding all your gravity, sir.

Clinch. jun. My business! Why my cousin lives here.

Wild. I know your cousin does live here, and *Vizard's* cousin, and every body's cousin——Hark'e, sir, I shall return immediately; and if you offer to touch her till I come back, I shall cut your throat, rascal. [*Exit.*

Clinch. jun. Why the man's mad, sure!

Dick. Mad, sir, ay; why he's a beau.

Clinch.

Clinch. jun. A beau! What's that? Are all madmen beaux?

Dick. No, sir; but most beaux are madmen. But now for your cousin: Remember your three scrapes, a kiss, and your humble servant. [Exeunt, *as into the house.*

SCENE, *the Street.*

Enter Wildair, Colonel following.

Stand. Sir Harry, Sir Harry!

Wild. I'm in haste, colonel; besides, if you're in no better humour than when I parted with you in the park this morning, your company won't be very agreeable.

Stand. You're a happy man, Sir Harry, who are never out of humour: can nothing move your gall, Sir Harry?

Wild. Nothing but impossibilities, which are the same as nothing.

Stand. What impossibilities?

Wild. The resurrection of my father to disinherit me, or an act of parliament against wenching. A man of eight thousand pounds *per annum* to be vexed! No, no; anger and spleen are companions for younger brothers.

Stand. Suppose one call'd you son of a whore behind your back.

Wild. Why, then wou'd I call him rascal behind his back; so we're even.

Stand. But suppose you had lost a mistress.

Wild. Why, then I wou'd get another.

Stand. But suppose you were discarded by the woman you love, that wou'd surely trouble you.

Wild. You're mistaken, colonel; my love is neither romantically honourable, nor meanly mercenary; 'tis only a pitch of gratitude; while she loves me, I love her; when she desists, the obligation's void.

Stand. But to be mistaken in your opinion, sir; if the Lady Lurewell (only suppose it) had discarded you—I say, only suppose it—and had sent your discharge by me.

Wild. Pshaw! that's another impossibility.

Stand. Are you sure of that?

Wild. Why, 'twere a solecism in nature. Why she's a rib of me, sir. She dances with me, sings with me, plays with me, swears with me, lies with me.

Stand.

Stand. How, sir?

Wild. I mean in an honourable way; that is, she lies for me. In short, we are as like one another as a couple of guineas.

Stand. Now that I have rais'd you to the highest pinnacle of vanity, will I give you so mortifying a fall, as shall dash your hopes to pieces—I pray your honour to peruse these papers. *[Gives him the packet.]*

Wild. What is't, the muster-roll of your regiment, Colonel?

Stand. No, no, 'tis a list of your forces in your last love campaign; and, for your comfort, all disbanded.

Wild. Prithee, good metaphorical colonel, what d'ye mean?

Stand. Read, sir, read; these are the *Sibyls* leaves that will unfold your destiny.

Wild. So it be not a false deed to cheat me of my estate, what care I——*[opening the packet]* humph! my hand! To the Lady *Lurewell*—To the Lady *Lurewell*—To the Lady *Lurewell*——What the devil hast thou been tampering with, to conjure up these spirits?

Stand. A certain familiar of your acquaintance, sir. Read, read.

Wild. *[Reading]*—Madam, my passion—so natural—your beauty contending—force of charms—mankind—eternal admirer *Wildair*! I ne'er was ashamed of my name before.

Stand. What, Sir *Harry Wildair* out of humour! ha, ha, ha! Poor Sir *Harry*; more glory in her smile than in the *Jubilee* at *Rome*, ha, ha, ha! But then her foot, Sir *Harry*, she dances to a miracle! ha, ha, ha! Fie, Sir *Harry*, a man of your parts write letters not worth keeping! What say'st thou, my dear knight errant? ha, ha, ha! you may seek adventures now indeed.

Wild. *[sings]* No, no, let her wander, &c.

Stand. You are jilted to some tune, sir; blown up with false music, that's all.

Wild. Now, why should I be angry that a woman is a woman? Since inconstancy and falshood are grounded in their natures, how can they help it?

Stand. Then they must be grounded in your nature; for she's a rib of you, Sir *Harry*.

Wild.

Wild. Here's a copy of verses too; I must turn poet in the devil's name—stay—'sdeath, what's here? 'This is her hand—Oh the charming characters! *My dear Wildair.* [*Reading*] That's I egad! *this buff bluff Colonel*—that's he—is the rarest fool in nature—the devil he is!—and as such have I us'd him—with all my heart, faith—I had no better way of letting you know that I lodge in St. James's, near the Holy Lamb. *Lurewell.* Colonel, I am your most humble servant.

Stand. Hold, fir, you sha'n't go yet; I ha'n't deliver'd half my message.

Wild. Upon my faith but you have, colonel.

Stand. Well, well, own your spleen; out with it, I know you're like to burst.

Wild. I am so, egad! ha, ha, ha!

[*Laugh and point at one another.*]

Stand. Ay, with all my heart, ha, ha!

Well, well, that's forc'd, Sir *Harry.*

Wild. I was never better pleas'd in all my life, by *Jupiter.*

Stand. Well, Sir *Harry*, 'tis prudence to hide your concern, when there's no help for't:— But to be serious now. The lady has sent you back all your papers there. I was so just as not to look upon 'em.

Wild. I'm glad on't, fir; for there were some things that I would not have you see.

Stand. All this she has done for my sake, and I desire you would decline any farther pretensions for your own sake. So, honest, good natur'd Sir *Harry*, I'm your humble servant. [*Exit.*]

Wild. Ha, ha, ha, poor colonel! O the delight of an ingenious mistress! what a life and briskness it adds to an amour, 'like the loves of mighty *Jove*, still suing 'in different shapes.' A *legerdemain* mistress, who, *præsto! pass!* and she's vanish'd; then *Hey!* in an instant in your arms again. [*Going.*]

Enter Vizard.

Viz. Well met, Sir *Harry*; what news from the Island of Love?

B

Wild.

Wild. Faith, we made but a broken voyage by your chart ; but now I am bound for another port : I told you the colonel was my rival.

Viz. The colonel ! curs'd misfortune ! another !

[*Aside.*

Wild. But the civilest in the world ; he brought me word where my mistress lodges : The story's too long to tell you now, for I must fly.

Viz. What ! have you given over all thoughts of *Angelica* ?

Wild. No, no, I'll think of her some other time. But now for the Lady *Lurewell* : Wit and beauty calls.

*That mistress ne'er can pall her lover's joys,
Whose wit can whet, whene'er her beauty cloy.
Her little amorous frauds all truths excel,
And make us happy, being deceiv'd so well.*

[*Exit.*

Viz. solus.—The colonel my rival too ! how shall I manage ? There is but one way—him and the knight will I set a tilting, where one cuts t'other's throat, and the survivor's hang'd : So there will be two rivals pretty decently dispos'd of. Since honour may oblige them to play the fool, why should not necessity engage me to play the knave.

[*Exit.*

SCENE, *Lurewell's Lodgings.*

Lurewell and Parly.

Lure. Has my servant brought me the money from my merchant ?

Par. No, madam ; he met alderman *Smuggler* at *Charing-Cross*, who has promis'd to wait on you himself immediately.

Lure. 'Tis odd that this old rogue shou'd pretend to love me, and at the same time cheat me of my money.

Par. 'Tis well, madam, if he don't cheat you of your estate ; for you say the writings are in his hands.

Lure. But what satisfaction can I get of him ? Oh ! here he comes.

Enter

Enter Smuggler.

Mr. Alderman, your servant; have you brought me any money, sir?

Smug. Faith, madam, trading is very dead; what with paying the taxes, raising the customs, losses at sea abroad, and maintaining our wives at home, the Bank is reduc'd very low.

Lure. Come, come, sir, these evasions won't serve your turn; I must have money, sir—I hope you don't design to cheat me.

Smug. Cheat you, madam! have a care what you say: I'm an alderman, madam! Cheat you, madam! I have been an honest citizen these five and thirty years!

Lure. An honest citizen! bear witness, *Parly!* I shall trap him in more lies presently.—Come, sir, tho' I am a woman, I can take a course.

Smug. What course, madam? You'll go to law, will ye? I can maintain a suit of law, be it right or wrong, these forty years, I am sure of that, thanks to the honest practice of the courts.

Lure. Sir, I'll blast your reputation, and so ruin your credit.

Smug. Blast my reputation! he, he, he! Why, I'm a religious man, madam; I have been very instrumental in the reformation of manners. Ruin my credit! ah, poor woman. There is but one way, madam,—you have a sweet leering eye.

Lure. You instrumental in the reformation! How?

Smug. *I whipt all the whores, cut and long-tail, out of the parish:—Ah! that leering eye!—Then I voted for pulling down the playhouse:—Ah! that ogle, that ogle:—Then my own pious example:—Ah! that lip, that lip!*

Lure. Here's a religious rogue for you now!—As I hope to be fav'd, I have a good mind to beat the old monster.

Smug. Madam, I have brought you about a hundred and fifty guineas, (a great deal of money as times go) and—

Lure. Come, give 'em me.

B 2

Smug.

Smug. Ah! that hand, that hand, that pretty soft, white—I have brought it, you see; but the condition of the obligation is such, that whereas that leering eye, that pouting lip, that pretty soft hand, that—you understand me; you understand, I'm sure you do, you little rogue——

Lure. Here's a villain now, so covetous, 'that he 'won't wench upon his own cost,' he would bribe me with my own money. I'll be reveng'd——Upon my word, Mr. Alderman, you make me blush; what d'ye mean, pray?

Smug. See here, madam.

[Puts a piece of money in his mouth.]

Buſs and guinea, buſs and guinea, buſs and guinea,

Lure. Well, Mr. Alderman, you have ſuch pretty winning ways, that I will, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Smug. Will you indeed, he, he, he! my little cocket; and when? and where? and how?

Lure. 'Twill be a difficult point, ſir, to ſecure both our honours; you muſt therefore be diſguiſ'd, Mr. Alderman.

Smug. Pſhaw! no matter, I am an old fornicator. I'm not half ſo religious as I ſeem to be. You little rogue; why, I'm diſguiſ'd as I am; our ſanctity is all outſide, all hypocrify.

Lure. No man is ſeen to come into this houſe after night-fall; you muſt therefore ſneak in, when 'tis dark, in woman's cloaths.

Smug. With all my heart.—I have a ſuit on purpoſe, my little cocket: I love to be diſguiſ'd, I cod. I make a very handſome woman, I cod I do.

Enter Servant, whispers Lurewell.

Lure. Oh! Mr. Alderman, ſhall I beg you to walk into the next room? here are ſome ſtrangers coming up.

Smug. Buſs and guinea firſt; ah, my little cocket!

[Exit.]

Enter Wildair.

Wild. My life, my ſoul, my all that heaven can give,

Lure. Death's life with thee, without thee death to live.

Welcome,

Welcome, my dear Sir Harry; I see you got my directions.

Wild. Directions! in the most charming manner, thou dear *Machiavel* of intrigue.

Lure. Still brisk and airy, I find, Sir Harry.

Wild. The sight of you, madam, exalts my air, and makes joy lighten in my face.

Lure. I have a thousand questions to ask you, Sir Harry. How d'ye like *France*?

Wild. Ah! *est le plus beau pais du monde.*

Lure. Then what made you leave it so soon?

Wild. Madam, *vous voyez que je vous sui par-tout.*

Lure. O monsieur, *je vous suis fort obligée*—But, where's the court now?

Wild. At *Marli*, madam.

Lure. And where my Count *La Valier*?

Wild. His body's in the church of *Nôtre Dame*; I don't know where his soul is.

Lure. What disease did he die of?

Wild. A *duel*, madam; I was his *doctor*.

Lure. How d'ye mean?

Wild. As most doctors do, I kill'd him.

Lure. *En cavalier*, my dear knight errant; well, and how, and how; what intrigues, what gallantries are carrying on in the *Beau Monde*?

Wild. I shou'd ask you that question, madam, since your ladyship makes the *Beau Monde* wherever you come.

Lure. Ah! Sir Harry, I've been almost ruin'd, pester'd to death here, by the incessant attacks of a mighty colonel; he has besieg'd me 'as close as our army did *Namur*.'

Wild. I hope your ladyship did not surrender tho'.

Lure. No, no, but was forced to capitulate; but since you are come to raise the siege, we'll dance, and sing, and laugh.

Wild. And love and kifs—*Montrez moi votre chambre.*

Lure. *Attende, attende, un peu*—I remember, Sir Harry, you promis'd me in *Paris*, never to ask that impertinent question again.

Wild. Pshaw, madam, that was above two months ago;

ago; besides, madam, treaties made in *France* are never kept.

Lure. Wou'd you marry me, Sir *Harry*?

Wild. Oh! *Le mariage est un grand mal.* — But I will marry you.

Lure. Your word, sir, is not to be rely'd on; if a gentleman will forfeit his honour in dealings of business, we may reasonably suspect his fidelity in an amour.

Wild. My honour in dealings of business! why, madam, I never had any business all my life.

Lure. Yes, Sir *Harry*, I have heard a very odd story, and am sorry that a gentleman of your figure shou'd undergo the scandal.

Wild. Out with it, madam.

Lure. Why, the merchant, sir, that transmitted your bills of exchange to you in *France*, complains of some indirect and dishonourable dealings.

Wild. Who, old *Smuggler*!

Lure. Ay, ay, you know him, I find.

Wild. I have some reason, I think; why, the rogue has cheated me of above five hundred pounds within these three years.

Lure. 'Tis your business then to acquit yourself publicly; for he spreads the scandal every where.

Wild. Acquit myself publicly! — Here, sirrah, my coach; I'll drive instantly into the city, and cane the old villain round the *Royal-Exchange*; 'he shall run the gauntlet through a thousand bristled beavers and formal cravats.'

Lure. Why, he is in the house now, sir.

Wild. What, in this house?

Lure. Ay, in the next room.

Wild. Then, sirrah, lend me your cudgel.

Lure. Sir *Harry*, you won't raise a disturbance in my house?

Wild. Disturbance, madam, no, no; I'll beat him with the temper of a philosopher. Here, Mrs. *Parly*, shew me the gentleman. [Exit with *Parly*.

Lure. Now shall I get the old monster well beaten, and Sir *Harry* pester'd next term with bloodsheds, batteries, costs and damages, solicitors and attorneys; and if they don't

don't teize him out of his good humour, I'll never plot again. *[Exit.]*

SCENE changes to another Room in the same House.

Enter Smuggler.

Smug. Oh, this damn'd tide-waiter! A ship and cargo worth five thousand pounds! why, 'tis richly worth five hundred perjuries.

Enter Wildair.

Wild. Dear Mr. Alderman, I'm your most devoted and humble servant

Smug. My best friend, Sir *Harry*, you're welcome to *England*.

Wild. I'll assure you, sir, there's not a man in the king's dominions I am gladder to meet, dear, dear Mr. Alderman.

[Bowing very low.]

Smug. O lord, sir, you travellers have the most obliging ways with you.

Wild. There is a business, Mr. Alderman, fall'n out, which you may oblige me infinitely by—I am very sorry that I am forc'd to be troublesome; but necessity, Mr. Alderman.

Smug. Ay, sir, as you say, necessity—But upon my word, sir, I am very short of money at present, but—

Wild. That's not the matter, sir; I'm above an obligation that way; but the business is, I'm reduc'd to an indispensable necessity of being oblig'd to you for a beating—Here take this cudgel.

Smug. A beating, sir *Harry*! ha, ha, ha! I beat a knight baronet! an alderman turn cudgel-player! ha, ha, ha!

Wild. Upon my word, sir, you must beat me, or I cudgel you; take your choice.

Smug. Pshaw, pshaw, you jest.

Wild. Nay, 'tis sure as fate: so, Alderman, I hope you'll pardon my curiosity. *[Strikes him.]*

Smug. Curiosity! Deuce take your curiosity, sir; what d'ye mean?

Wild. Nothing at all; I'm but in jest, sir.

Smug. O, I can take any thing in jest? but a man might imagine by the smartness of the stroke, that you were in downright earnest.

Wild. Not in the least, sir; [*Strikes him.*] not in the least indeed, sir.

Smug. Pray, good sir, no more of your jests, for they are the bluntest jests that ever I knew.

Wild. [*Strikes.*] I heartily beg your pardon, with all my heart, sir.

Smug. Pardon, sir! well, sir, that is satisfaction enough from a gentleman: But seriously now, if you pass any more of your jests upon me, I shall grow angry.

Wild. I humbly beg your permission to break one or two more. [*Strikes him.*]

Smug. O lord, sir, you'll break my bones: Are you mad, sir? murder, felony, manslaughter!

[*Wild. knocks him down.*]

Wild. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons; but I am absolutely compell'd to't, upon my honour, sir: nothing can be more averse to my inclinations, than to jest with my honest, dear, loving, obliging friend, the Alderman.

[*Striking him all this while, Smuggler tumbles over and over, and shakes out his pocket-book on the floor; Lurewell enters, takes it up.*]

Lure. The old rogue's pocket-book; this may be of use. [*Aside.*] O lord, Sir Harry's murdering the poor old man.——

Smug. O dear madam, I was beaten in jest, 'till I am murder'd in good earnest.

Lure. Well, well, I'll bring you off, *seigneur—frappez, frappez!*

Smug. O! for charity's sake, madam, rescue a poor citizen.

Lure. O you barbarous man! hold! hold! *frappez plus rudement!*

Frappez! I wonder you are not asham'd, [*Holding Wild.*] A poor reverend honest elder—[*helps Smug. up.*] It makes me weep to see him in this condition, poor man!

Now

Now the devil take you, Sir Harry—for not beating him harder. Well, my dear, you shall come at night, and I'll make you amends. [*Here Sir Harry takes snuff.*]

Smug. Madam, I will have amends before I leave the place.

Sir how durst you use me thus?

Wild. Sir?

Smug. Sir, I say that I will have satisfaction.

Wild. With all my heart. [*Throws snuff into his eyes.*]

Smug. O! murder, blindness, fire! O madam, madam, get me some water! water, fire, fire, water!

[*Exit with Lurewell.*]

Wild. How pleasant is resenting an injury without passion! 'Tis the beauty of revenge.

Let statesmen plot, and under business groan,
And settling public quiet, lose their own;
Let soldiers drudge and fight for pay, or fame,
For when they're shot, I think 'tis much the same;
Let scholars vex their brains with mood and tense,
And mad with strength of reason, fools commence,
Losing their wits in searching after sense.
Their Summum Bonum they must toil to gain,
And seeking pleasure, spend their life in pain:
I make the most of life, no hour mispend,
Pleasure's the mean, and pleasure is my end.
No spleen, no trouble shall my time destroy,
Life's but a span, I'll every inch enjoy.

[*Exit.*]

A C T III.

S C E N E, *The Street.**Enter Standard and Vizard.*

Stand. **I** Bring him word where she lodg'd! I the civil-
est rival in the world! 'Tis impossible.

Viz. I shall urge it no farther, sir.

I only thought, sir, that my character in the world might add authority to my words without so many repetitions.

Stand. Pardon me, dear *Vizard*.

Our belief struggles hard before it can be brought to yield to the disadvantage of what we love;

'Tis so great an abuse to our judgment, that it makes
'the faults of our choice our own failing.'

But what said Sir *Harry*?

Viz. He pitied the poor credulous colonel, laugh'd
heartily.

Flew away with all the raptures of a bridegroom, repeating these lines,

*A mistress ne'er can pall her lover's joys,
Whose wit can whet, whene'er her beauty cloy.*

Stand. *A mistress ne'er can pall!* By all my wrongs he whores her! And I'm made their property. Vengeance! *Vizard*, you must carry a note for me to Sir *Harry*.

Viz. What! a challenge! I hope you don't design to fight?

Stand. What! wear the livery of my king, and pocket an affront! 'twere an abuse to his sacred majesty; a soldier's sword, *Vizard*, should start of itself to redress it's master's wrong.

Viz. However, sir, I think it not proper for me to carry any such message between friends.

Stand. I have ne'er a servant here; what shall I do?

Viz.

Viz. There's *Tom Errand*, the porter, that plies at the *Blue Posts*, one who knows *Sir Harry* and his haunts very well; you may send a note by him.

Stand. Here, you, friend.

Viz. I have now some business, and must take my leave; I would advise you nevertheless against this affair.

Stand. No whispering now, nor telling of friends to prevent us. He that disappoints a man of an honourable revenge, may love him foolishly like a wife, but never value him as a friend.

Viz. Nay, the devil take him that parts you, say I.
[Exit]

Enter Porter running.

Err. Did your honour call porter?

Stand. Is your name *Tom Errand*?

Err. People call me so, an't like your worship—

Stand. D'ye know *Sir Harry Wildair*?

Err. Ay, very well, Sir; he's one of my best master's; many a round half-crown have I had of his worship; he's newly come home from *France*, sir.

Stand. Go to the next coffee-house, and wait for me.
[Exit *Errand*.]

O woman, woman, how blest is man, when favour'd by your smiles, and how accurs'd when all those smiles are found but wanton baits to sooth us to destruction?

Thus our chief joys with base allays are curst,

And our best things, when once corrupted, worst. [Exit.]

Enter Wildair and Clincher senior following.

Clinch. sen. Sir, sir, sir, having some business of importance to communicate to you, I wou'd beg your attention to a trifling affair that I wou'd impart to your understanding.

Wild. What is your trifling business of importance, pray, sweet sir?

Clinch. sen. Pray, sir, are the roads deep between this and *Paris*.

Wild. Why that question, sir?

Clinch. sen. Because I design to go to the *Jubilee*, sir; I understand that you are a traveller, sir; there is an air of travel in the tie of your cravat; sir—there is indeed, sir—I suppose, sir, you bought this lace in *Flanders*.

Wild. No, sir, this lace was made in *Norway*.

Clinch. sen. *Norway*, sir!

Wild. Yes, sir, of the shavings of deal-boards.

Clinch. sen. That's very strange now, faith—lace made of the shavings of deal-boards! Egad, sir, you travellers see very strange things abroad, very incredible things abroad, indeed. Well, I'll have a cravat of the very same lace before I come home.

Wild. But, sir, what preparations have you made for your journey?

Clinch. sen. A case of pocket-pistols for the bravo's—and a swimming girdle.

Wild. Why these, sir?

Clinch. sen. O Lord! Sir, I'll tell you—suppose us in *Rome* now; away goes I to some ball—for I'll be a mighty beau. Then, as I said, I go to some ball, or some bear-baiting, 'tis all one you know—then comes a fine *Italian Bona Reba*, and plucks me by the sleeve, *Signior Angle, Signior Angle*—she's a very fine lady, observe that—*Signior Angle*, says she—*Signora*, says I, and trips after her to the corner of a street, suppose it *Russel-Street* here, or any other street; then you know, I must invite her to the tavern, I can do no less.—There up comes her bravo; the *Italian* grows sausy, and I give him an *English* douse of the face. I can box, sir, box tightly; I was a 'prentice, sir,—but then, sir, he whips out his *stiletto*, and I whips out my *bull-dog*—flaps him through, trips down stairs, turns the corner of *Russel-Street* again, and whips me into the ambassador's train, and there I'm safe as a beau behind the scenes.

Wild. Is your pistol charg'd, sir?

Clinch. sen. Only a brace of bullets, that's all, sir.

Wild. 'Tis a very fine pistol, truly; pray let me see it.

Clinch. sen. With all my heart, sir.

Wild.

Wild. Hark'e, Mr. *Jubilee*, can you digest a brace of bullets?

Clinch. sen. O by no means in the world, fir!

Wild. I'll try the strength of your stomach, however. Sir, you're a dead man. [*Presenting the pistol to his breast.*]

Clinch. sen. Consider, dear fir! I am going to the *Jubilee*, when I come home again, I am a dead man at your service.

Wild. O very well, fir! but take heed you are not so choleric for the future.

Clinch. sen. Choleric, fir! Oons! I design to shoot seven *Italians* a week, fir.

Wild. Sir, you won't have provocation.

Clinch. sen. Provocation, fir! *Zauns*, fir, I'll kill any man for treading upon my corns, and there will be a devilish throng of people there; they say that all the princes in *Italy* will be there.

Wild. And all the fops and fiddlers in *Europe*—But the use of your swimming girdle, pray, fir?

Clinch. sen. O Lord, fir! That's easy. Suppose the ship cast away; now, whilst other foolish people are busy at their prayers, I whip on my swimming girdle, clap a month's provision into my pocket, and sails me away like an egg in a duck's belly.—And hark'e, fir, I have a new project in my head. Where d'ye think my swimming girdle shall carry me upon this occasion? 'Tis a new project.

Wild. Where, fir?

Clinch. sen. To *Civita Vecchia*, faith and troth, and so save the charges of my passage. Well, fir, you must pardon me now, I'm going to see my mistress. [*Exit.*]

Wild. This fellow's an accomplish'd ass before he goes abroad. Well! this *Angelica* has got into my heart, and I can't get her out of my head. I must pay her t'other visit. [*Exit.*]

SCENE, Lady Darling's House.

Enter Angelica.

Angel. Unhappy state of woman! whose chief virtue is but ceremony, and our much boasted modesty

but a slavish restraint. The strict confinement on our words, makes our thoughts ramble more; and what preserves our outward fame, destroys our inward quiet. — 'Tis hard that love shou'd be deny'd the privilege of hatred; that scandal and detraction shou'd be so much indulg'd, yet sacred love and truth debar'd our conversation.'

Enter Darling, Clincher jun. and Dicky.

Darl. This is my daughter, cousin.

Dick. Now, sir, remember your three scrapes.

Clinch. jun. saluting Angelica.] — One, two, three. Your humble servant. Was not that right, *Dicky*?

Dick. Ay, faith, sir; but why don't you speak to her?

Clinch. jun. I beg your pardon, *Dicky*, I know my distance. Wou'd you have me speak to a lady at the first sight?

Dick. Ay, sir, by all means; the first aim is the surest.

Clinch. jun. Now for a good jest, to make her laugh heartily. — By *Jupiter Ammon* I'll go give her a kiss.

[*Goes towards her.*

Enter Wildair, interposing.

Wild. 'Tis all to no purpose, I told you so before; your pitiful five guineas will never do—you may go, I'll outbid you.

Clinch. jun. What the devil! the madman's here again.

Darl. Bless me, cousin! what d'ye mean? Affront a gentleman of his quality in my house!

Clinch. jun. Quality—Why, madam, I don't know what you mean by your madmen, and your beaux, and your quality—they're all alike, I believe.

Darl. Pray, sir, walk with me into the next room.

[*Exit Darl. leading Clin. Dicky follows.*

Angel. Sir, if your conversation be no more agreeable than 'twas the last time, I wou'd advise you to make your visit as short as you can.

Wild.

Wild. The offences of my last visit, madam, bore their punishment in the commission ; and have made me as uneasy till I receive pardon, as your ladyship can be till I sue for it.

Angel. Sir *Harry*, I did not well understand the offence, and must therefore proportion it to the greatness of your apology ; if you wou'd therefore have me think it light, take no great pains in an excuse.

Wild. How sweet must the lips be that guard that tongue ! then, madam, no more of past offences, let us prepare for joys to come ; let this seal my pardon. [*Kisses her hand.*] And this [*Again*] initiate me to farther happiness.

Angel. Hold, fir,—one question, Sir *Harry*, and pray answer plainly—d'ye love me ?

Wild. Love you ! Does fire ascend ? Do hypocrites dissemble ? Usurers love gold, or great men flattery ? Doubt these, then question that I love.

Angel. This shews your gallantry, fir, but not your love.

Wild. View your own charms, madam, then judge my passion ; your beauty ravishes my eye, your voice my ear, and your touch has thrill'd my melting soul.

Angel. If your words be real, 'tis in your pow'r to raise an equal flame in me.——

Wild. Nay, then——I seize——

Angel. Hold, fir, 'tis also possible to make me detest and scorn you worse than the most profligate of your deceiving sex.

Wild. Ha ! A very odd turn this. I hope, madam, you only affect anger, because you know your frowns are becoming.

Angel. Sir *Harry*, you being the best judge of your own designs, can best understand whether my anger shou'd be real or dissembled ; think what strict modesty shou'd bear, then judge of my resentments.

Wild. Strict modesty shou'd bear ! Why faith, madam, I believe, the strictest modest may bear fifty guineas, and I don't believe 'twill bear one farthing more.

Angel. What d'ye mean, fir ?

Wild.

Wild. Nay, madam, what do you mean? If you go to that. I think now fifty guineas is a fine offer for your strict modesty, as you call it.

Angel. 'Tis more charitable, Sir *Harry*, to charge the impertinence of a man of your figure on his defect in understanding, than on his want of manners.—I'm afraid you're mad, sir.

Wild. Why, madam, you're enough to make any man mad. 'Sdeath, are you not a——

Angel. What, sir?

Wild. Why, a lady of—strict modesty, if you will have it so.

Angel. I shall never hereafter trust common report, which represented you, sir, a man of honour, wit, and breeding; for I find you very deficient in them all three. [Exit.]

Wild. Now I find that the strict pretences which the ladies of pleasure make to strict modesty, is the reason why those of quality are ashamed to wear it.

Enter Vizard.

Viz. Ah! Sir *Harry*, have I caught you? Well, and what success?

Wild. Success! 'tis a shame for you young fellows in town here, to let the wenches grow so saucy: I offer'd her fifty guineas, and she was in her airs presently, and flew away in a huff. I cou'd have had a brace of countesses in *Paris* for half the money, and *je vous remercie* into the bargain.

Viz. Gone in her airs, say you! and did not you follow her?

Wild. Whither shou'd I follow her?

Viz. Into her bed-chamber, man; she went on purpose. You a man of gallantry, and not understand that a lady's best pleas'd when she puts on her airs, as you call it?

Wild. She talk'd to me of strict modesty, and stuff.

Viz. Certainly. Most women magnify their modesty, for the same reason that cowards boast their courage, because they have least on't. Come, come, Sir *Harry*,

Harry, when you make your next assault, encourage your spirits with brisk *Burgundy*; if you succeed, 'tis well; if not, you have a fair excuse for your rudeness. I'll go in, and make your peace for what's past. Oh! I had almost forgot——*Col. Standard* wants to speak with you about some business.

Wild. I'll wait upon him presently; d'ye know where he may be found?

Viz. In the Piazza of *Covent-Garden*, about an hour hence, I promis'd to see him; and there you may meet him, to have your throat cut. [*Aside*.] I'll go in and intercede for you.

Wild. But no foul play with the lady, *Vizard*. [*Exit*.

Viz. No fair play, I can assure you. [*Exit*.

SCENE, *The Street before Lurewell's Lodgings*;
Clincher sen. and Lurewell coquetting in the Balcony.

Enter Standard.

Stand. How weak is reason in disputes of love? That daring reason which so oft pretends to question works of high omnipotence, yet poorly truckles to our weakest passions, and yields implicit faith to foolish love, paying blind zeal to faithless women's eyes. I've heard her falsehood with such pressing proofs, that I no longer should distrust it. Yet still my love wou'd baffle demonstration, and make impossibilities seem probable. [*Looks up*.] Ha! that fool too! what, stoop so low as that animal!—'tis true, women once fall'n, like cowards in despair, will stick at nothing; there's no medium in their actions. They must be bright as angels, or black as fiends. But now for my revenge, I'll kick her cully before her face, call her whore, curse the whole sex, and leave her. [*Goes in*.

Lurewell comes down with Clincher. The Scene changes to a Dining-Room.

Lure. O Lord, sir, it is my husband! what will become of you?

Clinch.

Clinch. sen. Ah! your husband! oh, I shall be murdered: What shall I do! where shall I run! I'll creep into an oven; I'll climb up the chimney; I'll fly; I'll swim;— I wish to the Lord I were at the *Jubilee* now. —

Lure. Can't you think of any thing, sir?

Clinch. sen. Think! not I; I never cou'd think to any purpose in my life.

Enter Tom Errand.

Lure. What do you want, sir?

Err. Madam, I am looking for Sir *Harry Wildair*; I saw him come in here this morning; and did imagine he might be here still, if he is not gone.

Lure. A lucky hit! here, friend, change cloaths with this gentleman, quickly, strip.

Clinch. sen. Ay, ay, quickly strip: I'll give you half a crown to boot. Come here; so. [*They change cloaths.*]

Lure. Now slip you [*To Clinch.*] down stairs, and wait at the door till my husband be gone; and get you in there [*To the porter*] till I call you. [*Puts Errand in the next room.*]

Enter Standard.

Oh, sir! are you come? I wonder, sir, how you have the confidence to approach me after so base a trick?

Stand. O madam, all your artifices won't avail.

Lure. Nay, sir, your artifices won't avail. I thought, sir, that I gave you caution enough against troubling me with Sir *Harry Wildair's* company when I sent his letters back by you; yet you, forsooth, must tell him where I lodg'd, and expose me again to his impertinent courtship!

Stand. I expose you to his courtship!

Lure. I'll lay my life you'll deny it now. Come, come, sir; a pitiful lie is as scandalous to a red coat as an oath to a black. 'Did not Sir *Harry* himself tell me, that he found out by you where I lodg'd?'

Stand. You're all lies: first, your heart is false; your eyes are double; one look belies another; and then
your

your tongues does contradict them all—madam, I see a little devil just now hammering out a lie in your *Pericranium*.

Lure. As I hope for mercy, he's in the right on't. [*Aside.*] 'Hold, Sir, you have got the play-house cant upon your tongue; and think, that wit may privilege your railing: but I must tell you, sir, that what is satire upon the stage, is ill manners here.'

Stand. 'What is feign'd upon the stage, is here in reality real falshood. Yes, yes, madam,'—I expos'd you to the court of your fool *Clincher*, too; I hope your female wiles will impose that upon me—also—

Lure. *Clincher!* Nay, now you're stark mad. I know no such person.

Stand. O woman in perfection! not know him? 'Slife, madam, can my eyes, my piercing jealous eyes, be so deluded? Nay, madam, my nose could not mistake him; for I smelt the sop by his *Pulvilio* from the balcony down to the street.

Lure. The balcony! ha, ha, ha! the balcony; I'll be hang'd but he has mistaken Sir *Harry Wildair's* footman with a new *French* livery, for a beau.

Stand. 'Sdeath, madam, what is there in me that looks like a cully! did not I see him?

Lure. No, no, you cou'd not see him; you're dreaming, colonel. Will you believe you eyes, now that I have rubb'd them open?—Here, you friend.

Enter Errand in Clincher's cloaths.

Stand. This is illusion all; my eyes conspire against themselves. 'Tis legerdemain.

Lure. Legerdemain! is that all your acknowledgement for your rude behaviour?—Oh, what a curse is it to love as I do!—'but don't presume too far, sir, on my affection: for such ungenerous usage will soon re-turn my tir'd heart.'—Begone, sir, [*To the porter*] to your impertinent master, and tell him I shall never be at leisure to receive any of his troublesome visits.—Send to me to know when I shou'd be at home!—'be gone, sir!'

44 THE CONSTANT COUPLE.

‘sir?’ [*Exit Errana*].—I am sure he has made me an unfortunate woman. [*Weeps*]

Stand. Nay then there is no certainty in nature; and truth is only falshood well disguis’d.

Lure. Sir, had not I own’d my fond foolish passion, I shou’d not have been subject to such unjust suspicions: but it is an ungrateful return. [*Weeping.*]

Stand. ‘Now, where are all my firm resolves? I will believe her just. My passion rais’d my jealousy; then why mayn’t love be as blind in finding faults, as in excusing them?’—I hope, madam, you’ll pardon me, since jealousy, that magnify’d my suspicion, is as much the effect of love, as my easiness in being satisfy’d.

Lure. Easiness in being satisfy’d! ‘you men have got an insolent way of extorting pardon, by persisting in your faults.’ No, no, sir; cherish your suspicions, and feed upon your jealousy: ’tis fit meat for your squeamish stomach.

With me all women shou’d this rule pursue:

Who think us false, shou’d never find us true.

[*Exit in a rage.*]

Enter Clincher senior, in the Porter’s Cloaths.

Clinch. sen. Well, intrigueing is the prettiest, pleasantest thing, for a man of my parts:—How shall we laugh at the husband, when he is gone?—How fillily he looks! he’s in labour of horns already.—To make a colonel a cuckold! ’twill be rare news for the alderman.

Stand. All this Sir Harry has occasion’d; but he’s brave, and will afford me a just revenge:—O! this is the porter I sent the challenge by—Well, sir, have you found him?

Clinch. sen. What the devil does he mean now?

Stand. Have you given Sir Harry the note, fellow?

Clinch. sen. The note! what note?

Stand. The letter, blockhead, which I sent by you to Sir Harry Wildair; have you seen him?

Clinch. sen. O lord, what shall I say now? Seen him? Yes, sir—no, sir.—I have, sir—I have not, sir.

Stand.

Stand. The fellow's mad. Answer me directly firrah, or I'll break your head.

Clinch. sen. I know Sir Harry very well, fir; but as to the note, fir, I can't remember a word on't: truth is I have a very bad memory.

Stand. O fir, I'll quicken your memory. [*Strikes him.*]

Clinch. sen. Zauns, fir, hold!—I did give him the note,

Stand. And what answer?

Clinch. sen. I mean, I did not give him the note.

Stand. What d'ye banter, rascal? [*Strikes him again.*]

Clinch. sen. Hold, fir, hold! He did send an answer.

Stand. What was't, villain?

Clinch. sen. Why, truly fir, I have forgot it: I told you that I had a very treacherous memory.

Stand. I'll engage you shall remember me this month, rascal.

[*Beats him off, and exit.*]

Enter Lurewell and Parly.

Lure. Fortboon, fortboon, fortboon! This is better than I expected; but fortune still helps the industrious.

Enter Clincher senior.

Clinch. sen. Ah! The devil take all intriguing, say I, and him who first invented canes—That curs'd colonel has got such a knack of beating his men, that he has left the mark of a collar of bandileers about my shoulders.

Lure. O, my poor gentleman! And was it beaten?

Clinch. sen. Yes, I have been beaten. But where's my cloaths? my cloaths?

Lure. What, you won't leave me so soon, my dear, will ye?

Clinch. sen. Will ye! If ever I peep into a colonel's tent again, may I be forc'd to run the gauntlet.—But my cloaths, madam.

Lure. I sent the porter down stairs with them: Did not you meet him?

Clinch. sen. Meet him! No, not I.

Par. No! He went out of the back-door, and is run clear away, I'm afraid.

[*Clinch. sen.*]

Clinch. sen. Gone, say you ! and with my cloaths ! my fine *Jubilee* cloaths !—O, the rogue, the thief !—I'll have him hang'd for murder.—But how shall I get home in this pickle ?

Par. I'm afraid, sir, the colonel will be back presently, for he dines at home.

Clinch. sen. Oh, then I must sneak off !
Was ever such an unfortunate beau,
To have his coat well thrash'd, and lose his coat also ?
[Exit.

Lure. Thus the noble Poet spoke truth :

*Nothing suits worse with vice than want of sense :
Fools are still wicked at their own expence.*

Par. Methinks, madam, the injuries you have suffer'd by men must be very great, to raise such heavy resentments against the whole sex.

Lure. The greatest injury that woman cou'd sustain ; they robb'd me of that jewel, which preserv'd, exalts our sex almost to angels ; but destroy'd, debases us below the worst of brutes, mankind.

Par. But I think, madam, your anger shou'd be only confin'd to the author of your wrongs.

Lure. The author ! alas, I know him not, ' which ' makes my wrongs the greater.'

Par. Not know him ! 'Tis odd, madam, that a man should rob you of that same jewel you mentioned, and you not know him.

Lure. Leave trifling ;—'tis a subject that always sours my temper : But since, by thy faithful service, I have some reason to confide in your secrecy, hear the strange relation.—Some twelve years ago, I liv'd at my father's house in *Oxfordshire*, blest with innocence, the ornamental, but weak guard of blooming beauty : I was then just fifteen, ' an age fatal to the female sex : ' our youth is tempting, our innocence credulous, romances moving, love powerful, and men are—villains. Then it happened, that three young gentlemen from the university coming into the country, and being benighted, and strangers, call'd at my father's : He was very glad of their company, and offer'd them the entertainment of his house.

Par.

Par. Which they accepted, no doubt: Oh! these strolling collegians are never abroad, but upon some mischief.

Lure. They had some private frolic or design in their heads, as appear'd by their not naming one another, which my father perceiving, out of civility, made no enquiry into their affairs; two of them had a heavy, pedantic, university air, a sort of a disagreeable scholastic boorishness in their behaviour; but the third!

Par. Ah! the third, madam;—the third of all things, they say, is very critical.

Lure. He was—but in short, nature cut him out for my undoing; he seem'd to be about eighteen.

Par. A fit match for your fifteen as cou'd be.

Lure. He had a genteel sweetness in his face, a graceful comeliness in his person, and his tongue was fit to sooth soft innocence to ruin. 'His very looks were witty, and his expressive eyes spoke softer, prettier things, than words cou'd frame.

'*Par.* There will be mischief by and by; I never heard a woman talk so much of eyes, but there were tears presently after.'

Lure. His discourse was directed to my father, but his looks to me. After supper I went to my chamber, and read *Cassandra*, then went to bed, and dreamt of him all night, 'rose in the morning, and made verses,' so fell desperately in love.—My father was so well pleas'd with his conversation, that he begg'd their company next day; they consented, and next night, *Parly* —

Par. Ah, next night, madam,—next night (I'm afraid) was a night indeed.

Lure. He brib'd my maid, with his gold, out of her honesty; and me, with his rhetoric, out of my honour.—She admitted him to my chamber, and there he vow'd, and swore, and wept, and sigh'd—and conquer'd.

Par. A lack-a-day, poor fifteen!

[Weeps.]

[Weeps.]

Lure. He swore that he wou'd come down from *Oxford* in a fortnight, and marry me.

Par.

Par. The old bait ! the old bait ?—I was cheated just so myself. [*Aside.*] But had not you the wit to know his name all this while ?

Lure. Alas ! what wit had innocence like mine ? He told me, that he was under an obligation to his companions of concealing himself then, but that he would write to me in two days, and let me know his name and quality. After all the binding oaths of constancy, ‘ joining hands, exchanging hearts,’ I gave him a ring with this motto, *love and honour* ; then we parted, but I never saw the dear deceiver more.

Par. No, nor never will, I warrant you.

Lure. I need not tell my griefs, which my father’s death made a fair pretence for ; he left me sole heiress and executrix to three thousand pounds a year : At last, my love for this single dissembler turn’d to a hatred of the whole sex ; and resolving to divert my melancholy, and make my large fortune subservient to my pleasure and revenge, I went to travel, where, in most courts of *Europe*, I have done some execution. Here I will play my last scene ; then retire to my country house, live solitary, and die a penitent.

Par. But don’t you still love this dear dissembler ?

Lure. Most certainly : ’Tis love of him that keeps my anger warm, ‘ representing the baseness of mankind full in view ; and makes my resentments work—We shall have that old impotent lecher, *Smuggler*, here to night ; I have a plot to swinge him, and his precise nephew, *Vizard*.

Par. I think, madam, you manage every body that comes in your way.

Lure. No, *Parly* ; those men, whose pretensions I found just and honourable, I fairly dismiss’d, by letting them know my firm resolutions never to marry. But those villains that wou’d attempt my honour, I’ve seldom fail’d to manage.

Par. What d’ye think of the colonel, madam ? I suppose his designs are honourable.

Lure. That man’s a riddle ; there’s something of honour in his temper that pleases ; I’m sure he loves me too, because he’s soon jealous, and soon satisfy’d. But
‘ he’s

‘ he’s a man still.—When I once tried his pulse about
 ‘ marriage, his blood ran as low as a coward’s. He swore
 ‘ indeed, that he lov’d me, but cou’d not marry me, for-
 ‘ sooth, because he was engag’d elsewhere. So poor a
 ‘ pretence made me disdain his passion, which otherwise
 ‘ might have been uneasy to me.—But hang him, I
 ‘ have teiz’d him enough.—Besides, *Parly*, I begin to
 ‘ be tir’d of my revenge :’—But this buff and guinea I
 must maul once more. I’ll hansel his woman’s cloaths
 for him. Go get me pen and ink ; I must write to *Vi-
 zard* too.

*Fortune, this once assist me as before ;
 Two such machines can never work in vain,
 As thy propitious wheel, and my projecting brain.*

[*Fent.*

A C T IV.

S C E N E, *Covent-Garden.*

Wildair and Standard meeting.

Stand. **I** Thought, *Sir Harry*, to have met you ere this
 in a more convenient place ; but since my
 wrongs were without ceremony, my revenge shall be
 so too. Draw, sir !

Wild. Draw, sir ! What shall I draw ?

Stand. Come, come, sir, I like your facetious hu-
 mour well enough ; it shews courage and unconcern. I
 know you’re brave ; and therefore use you thus. Draw
 your sword.

Wild. Nay, to oblige you, I will draw ; but the devil
 take me if I fight.—Perhaps, colonel, this is the prettiest
 blade you have seen.

Stand. I doubt not but the arm is good ; and there-
 fore think both worth my resentment. Come, sir.

C

Wild.

Wild. But, prithee colonel, dost think that I am such a madman, as to send my soul to the devil, and body to the worms upon every fool's errand? [Aside.]

Stand. I hope you're no coward, sir.

Wild. Coward, sir! I have eight thousand pounds a year, sir.

Stand. You fought in *Flanders*, to my knowledge.

Wild. Ay, for the same reason that I wore a red coat; because 'twas fashionable.

Stand. Sir, you fought a *French* Count in *Paris*.

Wild. True, sir; but there was no danger of lands, nor tenements: Besides, he was a beau, like myself. Now you're a soldier, colonel, and fighting's your trade, and I think it downright madness to contend with any man in his profession.

Stand. Come, sir, no more dallying: I shall take very unseemly methods, if you don't shew yourself a gentleman.

Wild. A gentleman! Why there again now. A gentleman! I tell you once more, colonel, that I am a baronet, and have eight thousand pounds a year. I can dance, sing, ride, fence, understand the languages. Now, I can't conceive how running you through the body shou'd contribute one jot more to my gentility. But pray, colonel, I had forgot to ask you, what's the quarrel?

Stand. A woman, sir.

Wild. Then I put up my sword. Take her.

Stand. Sir, my honour's concerned.

Wild. Nay, if your honour be concern'd with a woman, get it out of her hands as soon as you can. An honourable lover is the greatest slave in nature; some will say, the greatest fool. Come, come, colonel, this is something about the lady *Lurewell*, I warrant; I can give you satisfaction in that affair.

Stand. Do so then immediately.

Wild. Put up your sword first; you know I dare fight: But I had much rather make you a friend than an enemy. I can assure you, this lady will prove too hard for one of your temper. You have too much honour, too much in conscience, to be a favourite with the ladies.

Stand.

Stand. I'm assur'd, fir, she never gave you any encouragement.—

Wild. A man can never hear reason with a sword in his hand. Sheath your weapon; and then if I don't satisfy you, sheath it in my body.

Stand. Give me but demonstration of her granting you any favour, and it is enough.

Wild. Will you take my word?

Stand. Pardon me, fir, I cannot.

Wild. Will you believe your own eyes?

Stand. 'Tis ten to one whether I shall or no, they have deceiv'd me already.

Wild. That's hard—But some means I shall devise for your satisfaction—We must fly this place, else that cluster of mob will overwhelm us. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Mob, Tom Errand's Wife hurrying in Clincher senior in Errand's cloaths.

Wife. Oh, the villain, the rogue, he has murder'd my husband: Ah! my poor *Timothy*! [*Crying.*]

Clin. sen. Dem your *Timothy*!—your husband has murder'd me, woman; for he has carry'd away my fine *Jubilee* cloaths.

Wife. Ay, you cut-throat, have you not got his cloaths upon your back there?—Neighbours, don't you know poor *Timothy*'s coat and apron?

Mob. Ay, ay, it is the same.

First Mob. What shall we do with him, neighbours?

Second Mob. We'll pull him in pieces.

First Mob. No, no; then we may be hang'd for murder: But we'll drown him.

Clin. sen. Ah, good people, pray don't drown me; for I never learnt to swim in all my life. Ah, this plaguy intriguing!

Mob. Away with him, away with him to the *Thames*.

Clin. sen. Oh, if I had but my *swimming girdle* now.

Enter Constable.

Const. Hold, neighbours, I command the peace.

Wife. O Mr. Constable, here's a rogue that ha murder'd my husband, and robb'd him of his cloaths.

Const. Murder and robbery! then he must be a gentleman. Hands off there; he must not be abus'd.— Give an account of yourself. Are you a gentleman?

Clin. sen. No, sir, I am a beau.

Const. A beau! Then you have kill'd nobody, I'm persuaded. How came you by these cloaths, sir?

Clin. sen. You must know, sir, that walking along, sir, I don't know how, sir; I can't tell where, sir; and so the porter and I chang'd cloaths, sir.

Const. Very well! the man speaks reason, and like a gentleman.

Wife. But pray, Mr. Constable, ask him how he chang'd cloaths with him.

Const. Silence, woman! and don't disturb the court.— Well, sir, how did you change cloaths?

Clin. sen. Why, sir, he pull'd off my coat, and I drew off his: So I put on his coat, and he put on mine.

Const. Why, neighbour, I don't find that he's guilty: Search him; and if he carries no arms about him, we'll let him go. [*They search his pockets, and pull out his pistols.*]

Clin. sen. O Gemini! My *Jubilee* pistols!

Const. What, a case of pistols! Then the case is plain. Speak, what are you, sir? Whence came you, and whither go you?

Clin. sen. Sir, I came from *Russel-Street*, and am going to the *Jubilee*.

Wife. You shall go to the gallows, you rogue.

Const. Away with him, away with him to *Newgate*, straight.

Clin. sen. I shall go to the *Jubilee* now, indeed. [*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter Wildair and Standard.

Wild. In short, colonel, 'tis all nonsense: Fight for a woman! Hard by is the lady's house, if you please we'll wait on her together: You shall draw your sword; I'll draw my snuff-box: You shall produce your wounds receiv'd in war; I'll relate mine by *Cupid's* dart: 'You shall look big; I'll ogle:' You shall swear; I'll sigh: You shall *sa, sa*, and I'll *coupée*; and if she flies not to

my

my arms like a hawk to its perch, my dancing-master deserves to be damn'd.

Stand. With the generality of women, I grant you these arts may prevail.

Wild. Generality of women! Why there again, you're out. They're all alike, sir; I never heard of any one that was particular, but one.

Stand. Who was she, pray?

Wild. *Penelope*, I think she's call'd, and that's a poetical story too. When will you find a poet in our age make a woman so chaste?

Stand. Well, Sir *Harry*, your facetious humour can disguise falsehood, and make calumny pass for satire; but you have promis'd me ocular demonstration that she favours you: Make that good, and I shall then maintain faith and female to be as inconsistent as truth and falsehood.

Wild. 'Nay, by what you told me, I am satisfied that she imposes on us all: And *Vizard* too seems what I still suspected him: But his honesty once mistrusted, spoils his knavery:—But will you be convince'd, if our plot succeeds?

Stand. I rely on your word and honour, Sir *Harry*; which if I doubted, my distrust wou'd cancel the obligation of their security.'

Wild. Then meet me half an hour hence at the *Rummer*. You must oblige me by taking a hearty glass with me toward the fitting me out for a certain project, which this night I undertake.

Stand. I guess by the preparation, that woman's the design.

Wild. Yes, faith,—I am taken dangerous ill with two foolish maladies, modesty and love; the first I'll cure with *Burgundy*, and my love by a night's lodging with the damsel. A sure remedy. *Probatum est.*

Stand. I'll certainly meet you, sir.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter Clincher junior and Dicky.

Clin. jun. Ah! *Dicky*, this *London* is a sad place, a sad vicious place: I wish that I were in the country again. And this brother of mine! I'm sorry he's so great a rake: I had rather see him dead than see him thus.

Dick. Ay, sir, he'll spend his whole estate at this same Jubilee. Who d'ye think lives at this same Jubilee?

Clin. jun. Who, pray?

Dick. The Pope.

Clin. jun. The devil he does! My brother go to the place where the Pope dwells! He's bewitch'd sure!

Enter Tom Errand in Clincher senior's cloaths.

Dick. Indeed, I believe he is, for he's strangely alter'd.

Clin. jun. Alter'd! Why he looks like a jesuit already.

Err. This lace will sell. What a blockhead was the fellow to trust me with his coat! If I can get cross the garden, down to the water-side, I am pretty secure.

[*Aside.*

Clin. jun. Brother!—Alaw! O *Gemini*! Are you my brother?

Dick. I seize you in the king's name, sir.

Err. O lord! Shou'd this prove some parliament man now!

Clin. jun. Speak, you rogue, what are you?

Err. A poor porter, sir, and going of an errand.

Dick. What errand? Speak, you rogue.

Err. A fool's errand, I'm afraid.

Clin. jun. Who sent you?

Err. A beau, sir.

Dick. No, no; the rogue has murder'd your brother, and stript him of his cloaths.

Clin. jun. Murder'd my brother! O *crimini*! O my poor Jubilee brother!—Stay, by *Jupiter Ammon*, I'm heir tho': speak, firrah, have you kill'd him? Confess that you have kill'd him, and I'll give you half a crown.

Err.

Err. Who, I, sir? Alack-a-day, sir, I never kill'd any man, but a carrier's horse once.

Clin. jun. Then you shall certainly be hang'd; but confess that you kill'd him, and we'll let you go.

Err. Telling the truth hangs a man, but confessing a lie can do no harm: besides, if the worst come to the worst, I can but deny it again—Well, sir, since I must tell you, I did kill him.

Clin. jun. Here's your money, sir.—But are you sure you kill'd him dead?

Err. Sir, I'll swear it before any judge in *England*.

Dick. But are you sure that he's *dead in law*?

Err. Dead in law? I can't tell whether he be *dead in law*. But he's as dead as a door-nail; for I gave him seven knocks on the head with a hammer.

Dick. Then you have the estate by statute. Any man that is knock'd o'th' head is *dead in law*.

Clin. jun. But are you sure he was *compos mentis* when he was kill'd?

Err. I suppose he was, sir; for he told me nothing to the contrary afterwards.

Clin. jun. Hey! Then I go to the *Jubilee*—Strip, sir, strip. By *Jupiter Ammon*, strip.

Dick. Ah! don't swear, sir.

[*Puts on his brother's cloaths.*]

Clin. jun. Swear, sir! Zoons, han't I got the estate, sir? Come, sir, now I'm in mourning for my brother.

Err. I hope you'll let me go now, sir.

Clin. jun. Yes, yes, sir; but you must do me the favour to swear positively before a magistrate, that you kill'd him dead, that I may enter upon the estate without any trouble. By *Jupiter Ammon*, all my religion's gone, since I put on these fine cloaths—Hey, call me a coach somebody.

Err. Ay, master, let me go, and I'll call one immediately.

Clin. jun. No, no; *Dicky*, carry this spark before a justice, and when he has made oath, you may discharge him. And I'll go see *Angelica*.

[*Exeunt Dick and Errand.*]

Now that I'm an elder brother, I'll court, and swear,

and rant, and rake, and go to the *Jubilee* with the best of them. [Exit.]

SCENE, Lurewell's House.

Enter Lurewell and Parly.

Lure. Are you sure that *Vizard* had my letter?

Par. Yes, yes, madam; one of your ladyship's footmen gave it to him in the Park, and he told the bearer, with all transports of joy, that he wou'd be punctual to a minute.

Lure. Thus most villains some time or other are punctual to their ruin; and hypocrisy, by imposing on the world, at last deceives itself. Are all things prepar'd for his reception?

Par. Exactly to your ladyship's order; the Alderman too is just come, dress'd and cook'd up for iniquity.

Lure. Then he has got woman's cloaths on?

Par. Yes, madam, and has pass'd upon the family for your nurse.

Lure. Convey him into that closet, and put out the candles, and tell him, I'll wait on him presently.

[As Parly goes to put out the candles, somebody knocks.]

Lure. This must be some clown without manners, or gentleman above ceremony. Who's there?

Wildair sings.

' Thus Damon knock'd at Celia's door,

' He sigh'd, and begg'd, and wept, and swore,

' The sign was so,

' [knocks.]

' She answer'd, no.

' [knocks thrice.]

' No, no, no.

' Again he sigh'd, again he pray'd,

' No, Damon, no, I am afraid:

' Consider, Damon, I'm a maid.

' Consider,

Viz. Propitious darkness guides the lover's steps, and night that shadows outward sense, lights up our inward joy. 'Night! The great awful ruler of mankind, which, like the *Persian* monarch, hides its royalty to raise the veneration of the world. Under thy easy reign dissemblers may speak truth; all slavish forms and ceremonies laid aside, and generous villainy may act without constraint.'

Smug. [*Peeping out of the closet.*] Bless me! What voice is this?

Viz. 'Our hungry appetites, like the wild beasts of prey, now scour about, to gorge their craving maws;' the pleasure of hypocrisy, like a chain'd lion, once broke loose, wildly indulges its new freedom, ranging through all unbounded joys.

Smug. My nephew's voice, and certainly possess'd with an evil spirit; he talks as prophanelly as an actor possess'd with a poet.

Viz. Ha! I hear a voice: madam,—my life, my happiness, where are you, madam?

Smug. Madam! He takes me for a woman too: I'll try him. Where have you left your sanctity, Mr. *Vizard*.

Viz. Talk no more of that ungrateful subject—I left it where it has only business, with day-light; 'tis needless to wear a mask in the dark.

Smug. O the rogue, the rogue!—The world takes you for a very sober, virtuous gentleman.

Viz. Ay, madam, that adds security to all my pleasure.—With me a cully-'squire may squander his estate, and ne'er be thought a spendthrift—With me a holy elder may zealously be drunk, and toast his tuneful noise in sack, to make it hold forth clearer.—But what is most my praise, the formal rigid she, that rails at vice and men, with me secures her loosest pleasures, and her strictest honour——she who with scornful mien, and virtuous pride, disdains the name of whore, with me can wanton, and laugh at the deluded world.

Smug. How have I been deceived! then you are very great among the ladies.

Viz. Yes, madam, they know that like a mole in the earth, I dig deep, but invisible; not like those fluttering noisy sinners, whose pleasure is the proclamation of their faults; those empty flashes, who no sooner kindle, but they must blaze to alarm the world. But come, madam, you delay our pleasures.

Smug. He surely takes me for the lady *Lurewell*—she has made him an appointment too—but I'll be reveng'd of both—Well, sir, what are those you are so intimate with?

Viz. Come, come, madam, you know very well—those who stand so high, that the vulgar envy even their crimes, whose figure adds privilege to their sin, and makes it pass unquestion'd: fair, high, pamper'd females, whose speaking eyes, and piercing voice, would arm the statue of a *Stoic*, and animate his cold marble with the soul of an *Epicure*, all ravishing, lovely, and soft, and kind, like you.

Smug. 'I'm very lovely and soft indeed! you shall find me much harder than you imagine, friend'—Well, sir, but I suppose you've some other motive besides pleasure?

Viz. Yes, madam, the honestest motive in the world, interest—You must know, madam, that I have an old uncle, Alderman *Smuggler*, you have seen him, I suppose.

Smug. Yes, yes, I have some small acquaintance with him.

Viz. 'Tis the most knavish, precise, covetous old rogue, that ever died of the gout.

Smug. Ah! The young son of a whore! [*Aside.*] Well, sir, and what of him?

Viz. Hell hungers not more for wretched souls, than he for ill-got pelf—and yet (what's wonderful) he that would stick at no profitable villainy himself, loves holiness in another—he prays all *Sundays* for the sins of the week past—he spends all dinner-time in two tedious graces; and what he designs a blessing to the meat, proves a curse to his family—he's the most—

Smug. Well, well, sir, I know him very well.

Viz.

Consider,

No,

I'm a maid,

No, &c.

At last his sighs and tears made way,

She rose, and softly turn'd the key:

Come in, said she, but do not stay.

I may conclude

You will be rude,

But if you are, you may.'

Lure. This must be Sir Harry, tell him I'm not to be spoke with.

Par. Sir, my lady's not to be spoke with.

Wild. I must have that from her own mouth, Mrs.

Par. Play, gentlemen." [The music plays.]

Enter Sir Harry.

Lure. 'Tis too early for serenading, Sir Harry.

Wild. Wheresoever love is, there music is proper; there's an harmonious consent in their natures, and when rightly join'd, they make up the chorus of earthly happiness.

Lure. But, Sir Harry, what tempest drives you here at this hour?

Wild. No tempest, madam, but 'as fair weather as ever entic'd a citizen's wife to cuckold her husband in 'fresh air.' Love, madam. [Wild. taking her by the hand.]

Lure. As pure and white as angels soft desires,

Wild. Fierce, as when ripe consenting beauty fires.

Is't not so?

Lure. O villain! What privilege has men to our destruction, that thus they hunt our ruin? [Aside.] If this be a love token, [Wild. drops a ring, she takes it up.] your mistresses favours hang very loose about you, sir.

Wild. I can't, justly, madam, pay your trouble of taking it up by any thing, but desiring you to wear it.

Lure. You gentlemen have the cunningest ways of playing the fool, and are so industrious in your profuseness. Speak seriously, am I beholden to chance or design for this ring?

Wild. To design, upon my honour.—And I hope my design will succeed. *[Aside.]*

Lure. And what shall I give you for such a fine thing?

Wild. You'll give me another, you'll give me another fine thing. *[Both sing.]*

Lure. Shall I be free with you, Sir Harry?

Wild. With all my heart, madam, so I may be free with you.

Lure. Then plainly, sir, I shall beg the favour to see you some other time; for at this very minute I have two lovers in the house.

Wild. Then to be as plain, I must be gone this minute, for I must see another mistress within these two hours.

Lure. Frank and free.

Wild. As you with me—Madam, your most humble servant. *[Exit.]*

Lure. Nothing can disturb his humour. Now for my merchant and *Vizard.* *[Exit and takes the candles with her.]*

Enter Parly, leading in Smuggler, dress'd in woman's cloaths.

Par. This way, Mr. Alderman.

Smug. Well, Mrs. Parly,—I'm oblig'd to you for this trouble, here are a couple of shillings for you. Times are hard, very hard, indeed; but next time I'll steal a pair of silk stockings from my wife, and bring them to you.—'What are you fumbling about my pockets for?'

Par. 'Only setting the plaits of your gown;' here, sir, get into this closet, and my lady will wait on you presently. *[Puts him into the closet, runs out, and returns with Vizard.]*

Viz. Where would'st thou lead me, my dear auspicious little pilot?

Par. You're almost in port, sir; my lady's in the closet, and will come out to you immediately.

Viz. Let me thank thee as I ought. *[Kisses her.]*

Par. Pshaw, who has hir'd me best; a couple of shillings, or a couple of kisses? *[Exit.]*

Viz

Lure. Consider, Sir, that you're a compound of
 ' covetousness, hypocrisy, and knavery, and must be
 ' punish'd accordingly—You must be in petticoats,
 ' gouty monster, must ye! you must buss and guinea
 ' too; you must tempt a lady's honour, old satyr; away
 ' with him.

• [They hurry him off.

• Still may our sex the frauds of men oppose,
 • Still may our arts delude these tempting foes,
 • May honour rule, and never fall betray'd,
 • But Vice be caught in nets for virtue laid.

• [Exit.]

A C T V.

SCENE, *Lady Darling's House.*

Darling and Angelica.

Darl. **D**Aughter, since you have to deal with a man of
 so peculiar a temper, you must not think the
 general arts of love can secure him; you may therefore
 allow such a courtier some encouragement extraordinary,
 without reproach to your modesty.

Ang. I am sensible, madam, that a formal nicety
 makes our modesty sit aukward, and appears rather a
 chain to enslave, than bracelet to adorn us;—it should
 shew, when unmolested, easy and innocent as a dove, but
 strong and vigorous as a falcon when assaulted.

Darl. I'm afraid, daughter, you mistake Sir Harry's
 gaiety for dishonour.

Ang. Tho' modesty, madam, may wink, it must not
 sleep, when powerful enemies are abroad—I must con-
 fess, that of all men's, I won'd not see Sir Harry Wil-
 dair's faults; nay, I cou'd wrest his most suspicious
 words a thousand ways, to make them look like honour

—But,

—But, madam, in spite of love, I must hate him, and curse those practices which taint our nobility, and rob all virtuous women of the bravest men.——

Darl. You must certainly be mistaken, *Angelica*; for I'm satisfy'd Sir *Harry's* designs are only to court, and marry you.

Ang. His pretence, perhaps, was such; 'but women 'now, like enemies, are attack'd, whether by treachery, or fairly conquer'd, the glory of the triumph is 'the same.'——Pray madam, by what means were you made acquainted with his designs?

Darl. Means, child! why, my cousin *Vizard*, who, I'm sure, in your sincere friend, sent him. He brought me this letter from my cousin.——

[*Gives her the letter, which she opens.*]

Ang. Ha! *Vizard*! then I'm abus'd in earnest.——Wou'd Sir *Harry*, by his instigation, fix a base affront upon me? no, I can't suspect him of so ungenteel a crime.——This letter shall trace the truth——[*Aside.*] My suspicions, madam, are much clear'd; and I hope to satisfy your ladyship in my management, when next I see Sir *Harry*.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, here's a gentleman below calls himself *Wildair*.

Darl. Conduct him up. Daughter, I won't doubt your discretion. [Exit Darling.]

Enter Wildair.

Wild. Oh, the delights of love and *Burgundy*!——Madam, I have toasted your ladyship fifteen bumpers successively, and swallow'd *Cupids* like *Loches* to every glass.

Ang. And what then, sir?

Wild. Why then, madam, the wine has got into my head, and the *Cupids* into my heart; and unless by quenching quick my flame, you kindly ease the smart, I'm a lost man, madam.

Ang. Drunkenness, Sir *Harry*, is the worst pretence a gentleman can make for rudeness; for the excuse is as scandalous as the fault.——Therefore, pray consider
whq

THE CONSTANT COUPLE. Or

Viz. Then, madam, he has a swinging estate, which I design to purchase as a saint, and spend like a gentleman. He got it by cheating, and should lose it by deceit. By the pretence of my zeal and sobriety, I'll cozen the old miser one of these days out of a settlement and deed of conveyance——

Smug. It shall be a deed to convey you to the gallows, then, ye young dog. [*Aside.*]

Viz. And no sooner he's dead, but I'll rattle over his grave with a coach and six, to inform his covetous ghost how genteelly I spend his money.

Smug. I'll prevent you, boy, for I'll have my money bury'd with me. [*Aside.*]

Viz. Bless me, madam! here's a light coming this way. I must fly immediately; when shall I see you, madam.

Smug. Sooner than you expect, my dear.

Viz. Pardon me, dear madam, I would not be seen for the world. I would sooner forfeit my life, nay my pleasure, than my reputation. [*Exit.*]

Smug. Reputation! Reputation! That poor word suffers a great deal.—Well! thou art the most accomplish'd hypocrite that ever made a grave plodding face over a dish of coffee and a pipe of tobacco! he owes me for seven years maintenance, and shall pay me by seven years imprisonment; and when I die, I'll leave him the fee-simple of a rope and a shilling. [*Exit.*] 'Who are these? I begin to be afraid of some mischief—I wish that I were safe within the city liberties.—I'll hide myself. [*Stands close.*]

Enter Butler, with other Servants and Lights.

But. I say there are two spoons wanting, and I'll search the whole house—'t'wo spoons will be no small gap in my quarter's wages.—

Serv. When did you miss 'em, James?

But. Miss them! why I miss them now! in short they must be among you, and if you don't return them, I'll go to the cunning-man to-morrow morning; my spoons I want, and my spoons I will have.

Serv.

* *Serv.* Come, come, search about

* [*Search and discovers Smuggler.*]

* *But.* Hark'e, good woman, what makes you hide yourself? What are you asham'd of?

* *Smug.* Asham'd of? O Lord, Sir, I'm an honest old woman that never was asham'd of any thing.

* *But.* What are you, a midwife then? speak, did not you see a couple of stray spoons in your travels!

* *Smug.* Stray spoons!

* *But.* Ay, ay, stray spoons; in short you stole them, and I'll shake your old limbs to pieces, if you don't deliver them presently.

* *Smug.* Bless me; a reverend elder of seventy years old accus'd for *Petty Larceny*!—Why search me, good people, search me; and if you find any spoons about me, you shall burn me for a witch.

* *But.* Ay, we will search you, mistress.

* [*They search and pull the Spoons out of his pocket.*]

* *Smug.* O the devil, the devil!

* *But.* Where, where is he? Lord bless us! she is a witch in good earnest, may be.

* *Smug.* Oh, it was some devil, some Covent-Garden or St. James's devil, that put them in my pocket.

* *But.* Ay, ay, you shall be hang'd for a thief, burnt for a witch, and then carted for a bawd. Speak what are you?

* *Enter Lurewell.*

* *Smug.* I'm the Lady *Lurewell*'s nurse.

* *Lure.* What noise is this?

* *But.* Here is an old *Succubus*, madam, that has stole two silver spoons, and says she's your nurse.

* *Lure.* My nurse! O the impudent old jade, I never saw the wither'd creature before.

* *Smug.* Then I'm finely caught. O madam, madam, don't you know me? don't you remember bus and guinea?

* *Lure.* Was ever such impudence? I know thee! why thou'rt as brazen as a bawd in the side-box.—Take her before a justice, and then to *Newgate*, away.

* *Smug.* O! consider, madam, that I'm an alderman.

* *Lure.*

who you are so free with, sir; a woman of condition, that can call half a dozen footmen upon occasion.

Wild. Nay, madam, if you have a mind to toss me in a blanket, half a dozen chamber-maids would do better service. — Come, come, madam, tho' the wine makes me lisp, yet it has taught me to speak plainer. By all the dast of my ancient progenitors, I must this night rest in your arms.

Ang. Nay then; who waits there? [*Enter Footmen.* Take hold of that madman, and bind him.

Wild. Nay, then *Burgundy's* the word, slaughter will ensue. Hold,—do you know, scoundrels, that I have been drinking victorious *Burgundy*? [*Draws.*

Servants. We know you're drunk, sir,

Wild. Then how have you the impudence, rascals, to assault a gentleman with a couple of flasks of courage in his head?

Servants. We must do as our young mistress commands us.

Wild. Nay, then have among ye, dogs.

[*Throws money amongst them; they scramble and take it up. He pelting them out, shuts the door and returns.* Rascals, Poltroons,—I have charm'd the dragon, and now the fruit's my own.

Ang. O, the mercenary wretches! this was a plot to betray me.

Wild. I have put the whole army to flight: and now I'll take the general prisoner. [*Laying bold on her.*

Ang. I conjure you, sir, by the sacred name of honour, by your dead father's name, and the fair reputation of your mother's chastity, that you offer not the least offence—already you have wrong'd me past redress.

Wild. Thou art the most unaccountable creature.

Ang. What madness, Sir *Harry*! what wild dream of loose desire cou'd prompt you to attempt this baseness? View me well. — The brightness of my mind, methinks, should lighten outwards, and let you see your mistake in my behaviour. I think it shines with so much innocence in my face, that it should dazzle all your vicious thoughts: think not I am defenceless 'cause alone.

alone. Your very self is guard against yourself: I'm sure, there's something generous in your soul; my words shall snatch it out, and eyes shall fire it for my own defence.

Wild. [*Mimicking.*] Tal tidum, ti dum, tal ti didi, didum. A million to one now, but the girl is just come flush from reading the *Rival Queens*—'I gad, I'll at her in her own cant.

O my Statira, O my angry dear, turn thy eyes on me, behold thy beau in buskins.

Ang. Behold me, sir; view me with a sober thought, free from those fumes of wine that throw a mist before your sight, and you shall find that every glance from my reproaching eyes is arm'd with sharp resentment, and with a virtuous pride that looks dishonour dead.

Wild. This is the first whore in *Heroics* that I have met with. [*Aside.*] Look ye, madam, as to that slender particular of your virtue, we shan't quarrel about it; you may be as virtuous as any woman in *England*, if you please: you may say your prayers all the time:—but pray, madam, be pleas'd to consider what is this same virtue that you make such a mighty noise about: can your virtue bespeak you a front row in the boxes? No, for the players can't live upon virtue. Can your virtue keep you a coach and six? No, no; your virtuous woman walk on foot.——Can your virtue hire you a pew in the church? why, the very sexton will tell you, No. Can your virtue stake for you at picquet? No. Then, what business has a woman with virtue?——Come, come, madam, I offer'd you fifty guineas.——there's a hundred.—The devil! virtuous still! why, it is a hundred, five score, a hundred guineas.

Ang. O indignation! were I a man you durst not use me thus; but the mean, poor abuse you throw on me, reflects upon yourself; our sex still strikes an awe upon the brave, and only cowards dare affront a woman.

Wild. Affront! S'death, madam, a hundred guineas will set up a bank at Bassett, a hundred guineas will furnish out your lodgings with china; a hundred guineas will give you an air of quality; a hundred guineas will buy you a rich *Sscrutoir* for your *billet doux*, or a fine *Common-Prayer Book* for your virtue. A hundred guineas

guineas will buy a hundred fine things, and fine things are for fine ladies; and fine ladies are for fine gentlemen; and fine gentlemen are——'Egad, this *Burgundy* makes a man speak like an angel——Come, come, madam, take it, and put it to what use you please.

Ang. I'll use it as I would use the base unworthy giver! thus! [*Throws down the purse and stamps upon it.*]

Wild. I have no mind to meddle in state affairs; but these women will make me a Parliament man spite of my teeth, on purpose to bring in a bill against their extortion. She tramples under foot that deity which all the world adores.——O the blooming pride of beautiful eighteen! pshaw, I'll talk to her no longer; I'll make my market with the old gentlewoman, she knows business better.——[*Goes to the door*] Here, you, friend, pray desire the old lady to walk in.——Heark'e, egad, madam, I'll tell your mother.

Enter Lady Darling.

Darl. Well, Sir Harry, and how d'ye like my daughter, pray?

Wild. Like her, madam! — Heark'e, will you take it? why faith madam!——take the money, I say, or egad, all's out.

Ang. All shall out; sir, you're a scandal to the name of gentleman.

Wild. With all my heart, madam:—In short, madam, your daughter has us'd me somewhat too familiarly, tho' I have treated her like a woman of quality.

Darl. How, sir?

Wild. Why, madam, I have offer'd her a hundred guineas.

Darl. A hundred guineas! upon what score?

Wild. Upon what score! Lord, Lord, how these old women love to hear bawdy. Why, faith, madam, I have never a double *entendre* ready at present, but I'll sing you a song.

Behold

*Behold the goldfinches, tall al de rall,
And a man of my inches, tall al de rall,
You shall take um, believe me, tall al de rall,
If you will give me your — tall al de ral.*

A modish minuet, madam, 'that's all.

Darl. Sir, I don't understand you.

Wild. Ay, she will have it in plain terms; then, madam, in downright *English*, I offer'd your daughter a hundred guineas to ———

Ang. Hold, sir; stop your abusive tongue, too loose for modest ears to hear.—Madam, I did before suspect that his designs were base, now they're too plain; this knight, this mighty man of wit and humour, is made a tool to a knave; *Vizard* has sent him on a bully's errand to affront a woman; but I scorn the abuse, and him that offer'd it,

Darl. How, sir, come to affront us! d'ye know who we are, sir?

Wild. Know who you are! why, your daughter there, is Mr. *Vizard's*—cousin, I suppose:—and for you, madam—now to call her procuress A-la-mode de France, [*Aside.*] *J'estime votre occupation*——

Darl. Pray, sir, speak *English*.

Wild. Then to define her office, A-la-mode de *Londres*! [*Aside.*] I suppose your ladyship to be one of those civil, obliging, discreet, old gentlewomen, who keep their visiting days for the entertainment of their presenting friends, whom they treat with imperial tea, a private room, and a pack of cards. Now I suppose you do understand me.

Darl. This is beyond sufferance! but say, thou abusive man, what injury have you ever receiv'd from me, or mine, thus to engage you in this scandalous aspersions?

Ang. Yes, sir, what cause, what motives could induce you thus to debase yourself below your rank?

Wild. Hey day! now dear *Roxana*, and you my fair *Statira*, be not so very heroic in your stiles; *Vizard's* letter may resolve you, and answer all the impertinent questions you have made me.

Both Women. We appeal to that.

Wild.

Wild. And I'll stand to't; he read it to me, and the contents were pretty plain, I thought.

Ang. Here, sir, peruse it, and see how much we are injur'd, and you deceiv'd.

Wild. [*Opening the letter.*] But hold, madam, [*To Darling.*] before I read I'll make some condition:—Mr. Vizard says here, that I won't scruple 30 or 40 pieces. Now, madam, if you have clapt in another cypher to the account, and make it 3 or 4 hundred, egad I will not stand to't.

Ang. Now I can't tell whether disdain or anger be the most just resentment for this injury.

Darl. The letter, sir, shall answer you.

Wild. Well then [*Reads.*]

Out of my earnest inclination to serve your ladyship, and my cousin Angelica, Ay, ay, the very words I can say it by heart—I have sent Sir Harry Wildair—to—What the devil's this? sent Sir Harry Wildair to court my cousin!—He read to me quite a different thing.—He's a gentleman of great parts and fortune—He's a son of a whore and a rascal—And wou'd make your daughter very happy (Whistles) in a husband. (Looks foolish, and hums a song.) Oh, poor Sir Harry, what have the angry stars design'd?

Ang. Now, sir, I hope you need no infligation to redress our wrongs, since even the injury points the way.

Darl. Think, sir, that our blood for many generations, has run in the purest channel of unsully'd honour.

Wild. Ay, madam. [*Bows to her.*]

Ang. Consider what a tender flower is woman's reputation, which the least air of foul detraction blasts.

Wild. Yes madam. [*Bows to t'other.*]

Darl. Call then to mind your rude and scandalous behaviour.

Wild. Right, madam. [*Bows again.*]

Ang. Remember the base price you offer'd me. [*Exit.*]

Wild. Very true, madam; was ever man so catechiz'd?

Darl.

Darl. Then think that *Vizard*, villain *Vizard*, caus'd all this, yet lives: that's all; farewell.

Wild. Stay, madam, [*To Darling*] one word; is there no other way to redress your wrongs, but by fighting?

Darl. Only one, sir, which if you can think of, you may do; you know the business I entertain'd you for.

Wild. I understand you, madam. [*Exit Darling.*] Here am I brought to a very pretty dilemma, I must commit murder, or commit matrimony; which is best now? a license from *Doctors Commons*, or a sentence from the *Old Bailey*? If I kill my man, the law hangs me: if I marry my woman, I shall hang myself.—But, damn it.—Cowards dare fight; I'll marry, that's the most daring action of the two: so my dear cousin *Angelica*, have at you. [*Exit.*]

SCENE *Newgate.* Clincher senior, *solus.*

Clin. sen. How severe and melancholy are *Newgate* reflections! Last week my father died; yesterday I turn'd beau; to-day I am laid by the heels, and to-morrow shall be hung by the neck—I was agreeing with a bookseller about printing an account of my journey through *France* and *Italy*; but now the history of my travels must be thro' *Holborn* to *Tyburn*—*The last and dying speech of Beau Clincher, that was going to the Jubilee*—Come a half-penny a-piece. A sad sound, a sad sound, faith! 'tis one way to have a man's death make a great noise in the world.

Enter Smuggler and Gaoler.

Smug. Well, friend, I have told you who I am: so send these letters into *Thames Street*, as directed; they are to gentlemen that will bail me. [*Exit Gaoler.*] Eh! this *Newgate* is a very populous place: here's robbery and repentance in every corner.—Well, friend, what are you? a cut-throat or a bum-bailiff?

Clin. sen. What are you, mistress? a bawd or a witch? heark'e, if you are a witch, d'ye see, I'll give you a hundred pounds to mount me on a broom-staff, and whip me away to the *Jubilee*.

Smug.

Smug. The Jubilee! O, you young rake-hell, what brought you here?

Clin. sen. Ah, you old rogue, what brought you here, if you go to that?

Smug. I knew, sir, what your powdering, your prinking, your dancing, and your frisking, would come to.

Clin. sen. And I knew what your cozening, your extortion, and your smuggling wou'd come to.

Smug. Ay, sir, you must break your indentures, and run to the devil in a full bottom wig, must you?

Clin. sen. Ay, sir, you must put off your gravity, and run to the devil in petticoats:—you design to swing in masquerade, master, d'ye?

Smug. Ay, you must go to the plays too, firrah: Lord, Lord! what business has a 'prentice at a Play-house, unless it be to hear his master made a cuckold, and his mistress a whore? It is ten to one now, but some malicious poet has my character upon the stage within this month: 'tis a hard matter now, that an honest sober man can't sin in private for this plaguy stage, I gave an honest gentleman five guineas myself towards writing a book against it: and it has done no good, we see.

Clin. sen. Well, well, master, take courage! our comfort is, we have liv'd together, and shall die together, only with this difference, that I have liv'd like a fool, and shall die like a knave; and you have liv'd like a knave, and shall die like a fool.

Smug. No, firrah! I have sent a messenger for my cloaths, and shall get out immediately, and shall be upon your jury by and by.—Go to prayers, you rogue, to prayers. [Exit.]

Clin. sen. Prayers! it is a hard taking when a man must say grace to the gallows.—Ah, this cursed intriguing! had I swung handsomely in a silken garter now, I had died in my duty; but to hang in hemp, like the vulgar, it is very ungenteel.

Enter Tom Errand.

A reprieve! a reprieve! thou dear, dear——damn'd rogue. Where have you been? thou art the most welcome—Son of whore; where's my cloaths?

Err.

Err. Sir, I see where mine are : come, sir, strip, sir, strip.

Clin. sen. What, sir, will you abuse a gentleman ?

Err. A gentleman ! ha, ha, ha ! d'ye know where you are, sir ? we're all gentlemen here.—I stand up for liberty and property.—*Newgate's* a common wealth. No courtier has business among us ; come, sir.

Clin. sen. Well, but stay, stay, till I send for my own cloaths : I shall get out presently.

Err. No, no, sir ! I'll ha' you into the dungeon, and uncase you.

Clin. sen. Sir, you can't master me ; for I'm twenty thousand strong.

[*Exeunt struggling,*

SCENE, *Changes to Lady Darling's House.*

Enter Wildair with letters, Servants following.

Wild. Here, fly all around, and bear these as directed ; you to *Westminster*,—you to *St. James's*, and you into the city.—Tell all my friends, a bridegroom's joy invites their presence. Look all of ye like bridegrooms also : all appear with hospitable looks, and bear a welcome in your faces.—Tell 'em I'm marry'd. If any ask to whom, make no reply ; but tell 'em that I'm marry'd, that joy shall crown the day, and love the night. Be gone, fly.

Enter Standard.

A thousand welcomes, friend ; my pleasure's now complete, since I can share it with my friend : brisk joy shall bound from me to you ; then back again ; and, like the sun, grows warmer by reflection.

Stand. You're always pleasant, *Sir Harry* ; but this transcends yourself : whence proceeds it ?

Wild. Canst thou not guess, my friend ? whence flows all earthly joy ? what is the life of man, and soul of pleasure ?—*Woman*—What fires the heart with transport, and the soul with raptures ? *Lovely woman*—What is the master-stroke and smile of the creation, but *charming virtuous woman* ?—When nature in the general composition, first brought woman forth, like a
flush'd

flush'd poet, ravish'd with his fancy, with ecstasy it blest the fair production!—methinks, my friend, you relish not my joy. What is the cause?

Stand. Canst thou not guess.—What is the bane of man, and scourge of life, but *woman*?—What is the heathenish idol man sets up, and is damn'd for worshipping? *Treacherous woman*.—What are those, whose eyes, like basilisks, shine beautiful for sure destruction, whose smiles are dangerous as the grin of fiends, but *false deluding woman*?—Woman! whose composition inverts humanity; their bodies heavenly; but their souls are clay.

Wild. Come, come, colonel, this is too much; I know your wrongs receiv'd from *Lurewell* may excuse your resentments against her. But it is unpardonable to charge the failings of a single woman upon the whole sex.—I have found one, whose virtues——

Stand. So have I, Sir *Harry*; I have found one whose pride's above yielding to a prince. And if lying, dissimulation, perjury and falshood, be no breaches in a woman's honour, she's as innocent as infancy.

Wild. Well, colonel, I find your opinion grows stronger by opposition; I shall now therefore wave the argument, and only beg you for this day to make a shew of complaisance at least.—Here comes my charming bride.

Enter Darling and Angelica.

Stand. [Saluting *Angelica*.] I wish you, madam, all the joys of love and fortune.

Enter Clincher junior.

Clin. jun. Gentlemen and ladies, I'm just upon the spur, and have only a minute to take my leave.

Wild. Whither are you bound, sir?

Clin. jun. Bound, sir! I'm going to the *Jubilee*, sir.

Darl. Bless me, cousin! how came you by these cloaths?

Clin. jun. Cloaths! ha, ha, ha! the rarest jest! ha, ha, ha! I shall burst, by *Jupiter Ammon*, I shall burst!

Darl. What's the matter, cousin?

Clin. jun. The matter! ha, ha, ha! why, an honest porter, ha, ha, ha! has knock'd out my brother's brains, ha, ha, ha!

Wild. A very good jest, I'faith, ha, ha, ha!

Clin. jun. Ay, sir, but the jest of all is, he knock'd out his brains with a hammer, and so he is as dead as a door-nail, ha, ha, ha!

Darl. And do you laugh, wretch?

Clin. jun. Laugh! ha, ha, ha! let me see e'er a younger brother in *England* that won't laugh at such a jest.

Ang. You appeared a very sober pious gentleman some hours ago.

Clin. jun. Pshaw, I was a fool then: but now, madam, I'm a wit; I can rake now.—As for your part, madam, you might have had me once!—But now, madam, if you should fall to eating chalk, or gnawing the sheets, it is none of my fault,—Now, madam—I have got an estate, and I must go to the *Jubilee*.

Enter Clincher senior in a blanket.

Clin. sen. Must you so, rogue, must ye! You will go to the *Jubilee*, will you?

Clin. jun. A ghost, a ghost!—Send for the dean and chapter presently.

Clin. sen. A ghost! No, no, firrah, I'm an elder brother, rogue.

Clin. jun. I don't care a farthing for that; I'm sure you're dead in law.

Clin. sen. Why so, firrah; why so?

Clin. jun. Because, sir, I can get a fellow to swear he knock'd out your brains.

Wild. An odd way of swearing a man out of his life?

Clin. jun. Smell him, gentlemen, he has a deadly scent about him. ———

Clin. sen. Truly the apprehensions of death may have made me savour a little—O Lord,—the colonel! the apprehensions of him may make the savour worse, I'm afraid.

Clin. jun. In short, sir, were you a ghost, or brother or devil, I will go to the *Jubilee*, by *Jupiter Ammon*.

Stand. Go to the *Jubilee*, go the *Bear-Garden*,—the travel of such fools as you doubly injures our country; you expose our native follies, which ridicule us among strangers, and return fraught only with their vices, which you vend here for fashionable gallantry; a travel-
ling

ling fool is as dangerous as a home-bred villain—Get you to your native plough and cart, converse with animals like yourselves, sheep and oxen; men are creatures you don't understand.

Wild. Let 'em alone, colonel, their folly will be now diverting. Come, gentlemen, we'll dispute this point some other time; I hear some fiddles tuning, let's hear how they can entertain us.

A Servant enters and whispers Wildair.

Madam, shall I beg you to entertain the company in the next room for a moment: [To Darling.

Darl. With all my heart—Come, gentlemen.

[*Exeunt omnes but Wildair.*

Wild. A lady to enquire for me! who can this be?

Enter Lurewell.

O! madam, this favour is beyond my expectation, to come uninvited to dance at my wedding.—What d'ye gaze at, madam?

Lure. A monster—if thou'rt marry'd, thou'rt the most perjur'd wretch that e'er avouch'd deceit.

Wild. Hey dey! why, madam, I'm sure I never swore to marry you: I made indeed a slight promise, upon condition of your granting me a small favour, but you would not consent you know.

Lure. How he upbraids me with my shame.—Can you deny your binding vows when this appears a witness 'gainst your falshood. [*Shews a ring.*] Methinks the motto of this sacred pledge shou'd flash confusion in your guilty face—Read, read here the binding words of love and honour, words not unknown to your perfidious tongue,—tho' utter strangers to your treacherous heart.

Wild. The woman's stark staring mad, that's certain.

Lure. Was it maliciously design'd to let me find my misery when past redress; to let me know you, only to know you false?—Had not cursed chance shew'd me the surprizing motto, I had been happy—The first knowledge I had of you was fatal to me, and this second worse.

Wild. What the devil is all this!—madam, I'm not at leisure for raillery at present, I have weighty affairs upon my hands; the business of pleasure, madam; any other time. —————

[*Going.*
Lure.

Lure. Stay, I conjure you stay.

Wild. Faith I can't, my bride expects me; but hark'e, when the honey-moon is over, about a month or two hence, I may do you a small favour. [*Exit.*]

Lure. Grant me some wild expressions, Heavens, or I shall burst—Woman's weakness, man's falshood, my own shame, and love's disdain, at once swell up my breast——Words, words, or I shall burst. [*Going.*]

Enter Standard.

Stand. Stay, madam, you need not shun my sight; for if you are a perfect woman, you have confidence to out-face a crime, and bear the charge of guilt without a blush.

Lure. The charge of guilt! What? making a fool of you? I've don't, and glory in the act; 'the height of female justice were to make you all hang or drown;' dissembling to the prejudice of men is virtue; and every look, or sign, or smile, or tear that can deceive, is meritorious.

Stand. Very pretty principles truly—if there be truth in woman, 'tis now in thee—Come, madam, you know that you're discovered, and being sensible you can't escape, you wou'd now turn to bay.

That Ring, madam, proclaims you guilty.

Lure. O monster, villain perfidious villain! has he told you?

Stand. I'll tell it you, and loudly too.

Lure. O name it not—yet, speak it out, 'tis so just a punishment for putting faith in man, that I will bear it all; 'and let credulous maids, that trust their honour to the tongues of men, that hear their shame proclaim'd.'—Speak now, what his busy scandal, and your improving malice both dare utter.

Stand. Your falshood can't be reach'd by malice nor by satire; your actions are the justest libel on your fame—your words, your looks, your tears, I did believe in spite of common fame. Nay, 'gainst mine own eyes, I still maintain'd your truth. I imagin'd *Wildair's* boasting of your favours to be the pure result of his own vanity: at last he urg'd your taking presents of him, as a convincing proof of which you yesterday from him receiv'd

ceiv'd that ring, which ring, that I might be sure he gave it, I lent it him for that purpose!

Lure. Ha! You lent it him for that purpose!

Stand. Yes, yes, madam, I lent it him for that purpose—no denying it—I know it well, for I have worn it long, and desire you now, madam, to restore it to the just owner.

Lure. The just owner! think, sir, think but of what importance 'tis to own it; if you have love and honour in your soul, 'tis then most justly yours; if not, you are a robber, and have stol'n it basely.

Stand. Ha!—your words, like meeting flints, have struck a light to shew me something strange—but tell me instantly, is not your real name *Manly*?

Lure. Answer me first; did not you receive this ring about twelve years ago?

Stand. I did.

Lure. And were not you about that time entertain'd two nights at the house of Sir *Oliver Manly* in *Oxfordshire*?

Stand. I was, I was: [*Runs to her and embraces her.*] The blest remembrance fires my soul with transport—I know the rest—you are the charming she, and I the happy man.

Lure. How has blind fortune stumbled on the right! but where have you wander'd since?—'twas cruel to forsake me.

Stand. The particulars of my fortune are too tedious now; but to discharge myself from the stain of dishonour, I must tell you, that immediately upon my return to the university, my elder brother and I quarrell'd: my father, to prevent further mischief, posts me away to travel: I writ to you from *London*, but fear the letter came not to your hands.

Lure. I never had the least account of you by letter or otherwise.

Stand. Three years I liv'd abroad, and at my return, found you were gone out of the kingdom, tho' none could tell me whither: missing you thus, I went to *Flanders*, serv'd my king till the peace commenc'd; then fortunately going on board at *Amsterdam*, one ship transported us both to *England*. At the first sight I lov'd,

tho'

tho' ignorant of the hidden cause—You may remember, madam, that talking once of marriage, I told you I was engaged; to your dear self I meant.

Lure. Then men are still most generous and brave—and to reward your truth, an estate of three thousand pounds a year waits your acceptance; and if I can satisfy you in my past conduct, 'and the reasons that engaged me to deceive all men,' I shall expect the honourable performance of your promise, and that you will stay with me in *England*.

Stand. Stay! nor fame, nor glory, e'er shall part us more. 'My honour can be no where more concerned than here.'

Enter Wildair, Angelica, and both Clinchers.

Oh! Sir Harry, fortune has acted miracles to day; the story's strange and tedious, but all amounts to this; that woman's mind is charming as her person, and I am made a convert too to beauty.

Wild. I wanted only this to make my pleasure perfect. And now, madam, we may dance and sing, and love and kiss in good earnest.——

A dance here. After the dance, enter Smuggler.

Smug. So, gentlemen and ladies, I'm glad to find you so merry; is my nephew gracious among ye?

Wild. Sir, he dares not shew his face among such honourable company, for your gracious nephew is——

Smug. What, sir? have a care what you say.

Wild. A villain, sir.

Smug. With all my heart—I'll pardon you the beating me for that very word. And pray, Sir Harry when you see him next, tell him this news from me, that I have disinherited him, that I will leave him as poor as a disbanded quarter-master. And this is the positive and stiff resolution of threescore and ten; an age that sticks as obstinately to its purpose, as to the old fashion of its cloak.

Wild. You see, madam, [*To Angel.*] how industriously fortune has punish'd his offence to you.

Ang. I can scarcely, sir, reckon it an offence, considering the happy consequence of it.

Smug. O! Sir Harry, he is as hypocritical——

Lure.

Lure. As yourself, Mr. Alderman. How fares my good old nurse, pray sir?

Smug. O madam, I shall be even with you before I part with your writings and money, that I have in my hands.

Stand. A word with you, Mr. Alderman; do you know this pocket-book?

Smug. O Lord, it contains an account of all my secret practices in trading [*Aside.*] How came you by it, sir?

Stand. Sir Harry here dusted it out of your pocket, at this lady's house yesterday; it contains an account of some secret practices in your merchandizing; among the rest, the counterpart of an agreement with a correspondent at *Bourdeaux*, about transporting *French* wine in *Spanish* casks—First return this lady all her writings, then I shall consider whether I shall lay your proceedings before the Parliament or not, whose justice will never suffer your smuggling to go unpunish'd.

Smug. O my poor ship and cargo!

Clin. sen. Hark'e, master, you had as good come along with me to the *Jubilee* now.

Ang. Come, Mr. Alderman, for once let a woman advise; wou'd you be thought an honest man, banish covetousness, that worst gout of age: avarice is a poor pilfering quality of the soul, and will as certainly cheat, as a thief wou'd steal—Wou'd you be thought a reformer of the times, be less severe in your censures, less rigid in your precepts, and more strict in your example.

Wild. Right, madam, virtue flows freer from imitation, than compulsion; of which, colonel, your conversion and mine are just examples.

*In vain are musty morals taught in schools,
By rigid teachers, and as rigid rules,
Where virtue with a frowning aspect stands,
And frights the pupil from its rough commands.
But woman ———*

*Charming women can true converts make,
We leave the precepts for the teacher's sake,
Virtue in them appears so bright, so gay,
We hear with transport, and with pride obey.*

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE.

NOW all depart each his respective Way,
 To spend an Evening's Chat upon the Play;
 Some to Hippolito's; one homeward goes,
 And one with loving *she* retires to th' Rose.
 The am'rous Pair in all Things frank and free,
 Perhaps may save the Play in Number Three.
 The tearing Spark, of Phyllis ought gain says,
 Breaks th' Drawer's Head, kicks her, and murders Bays.
 To Coffee, some retreat to save their Pockets,
 Others, more generous, damn the Play at Locket's;
 But there, I hope, the Author's Fears are vain,
 Malice ne'er spoke in generous Champaign.
 That Poet merits an ignoble Death,
 Who fears to fall over a brave Monteth.
 The Privilege of Wine we only ask,
 You'll taste again, before you damn the Flask.
 Our Author fears not you; but those he may,
 Who in cold Blood murder a man in Tea.
 Those Men of Spleen, who fond the World should know it
 Sit down, and for their Two-pence damn a Poet.
 Their Criticisms good, that we can say for't,
 They understand a Play—too well to pay for't.
 From Box to Stage, from Stage to Box they run,
 First steal the Play, then damn it when they've done.
 But now, to know what Fate may us betide,
 Among our Friends in Cornhill and Cheapside.
 But those I think, have but one Rule for Plays;
 They'll say they're good, if so the world but says.
 If it should please them, and their Spouses know it,
 They strait enquire what Kind of Man's the Poet.
 But from Side-box we dread a fearful Doom,
 All the good-natur'd Beaux are gone to Rome.
 The Ladies Censure I'd almost forgot,
 Then for a Line or two t'engage their Vote:
 But that Way's odd, below our Author's Aim,
 No less than his whole Play is Compliment to them,
 For their Sakes then the Play can't miss succeeding,
 Tho' Critics may want Wit, they have good Breeding;
 They won't, I'm sure, forfeit the Ladies Graces,
 By shewing their Ill-nature to their Faces;
 Our Business with good Manners may be done,
 Flatter us here, and damn us when you're gone.

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